Literacy Exercises in Secondary Education Course Books *English Update*, *Open Road* and *Log In!*

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Lukeminen ja kirjoittaminen ovat tärkeitä taitoja englannin kielen opiskelussa, ja näitä taitoja tulee oppikirjojen harjoittaa. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kolmea toisen asteen oppikirjaa - lukion englannin oppikirjoja *Open Road Course 1* ja *English Update Course 1* sekä ammattikoulun oppikirjaa *Log In!* - sisällönanalyysin näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksessa luodaan kirjallisuuden ja materiaalien pohjalta luku- ja kirjoitustaitoa tukevat tehtävätyypit, luokitellaan kaikki kirjojen lukemista ja kirjoittamista harjoittavat tehtävät näihin tyyppeihin ja verrataan kirjoja keskenään. Tutkimuksen keskipisteenä on kirjojen väliset erot ja se, miten kirjoissa opetetaan eri lukutekniikoita ja –strategioita näiden tehtävien avulla.

Tutkielmassa aiheen käsittely aloitetaan määrittelemällä tärkeät käsitteet. Luku- ja kirjoitustaito on määritelmältään laaja ja moniulotteinen, ja tämä otetaan tutkimuksessa huomioon. Myös lukeminen on prosessina monimutkainen ja siihen kuuluu viestin koodaamisen ja ymmärtämisen lisäksi skeemat, taustatiedot maailmasta ja esimerkiksi sanaston laajuus. Luku- ja kirjoitustaitoa kehittävän tehtävän määritelmä on myös laaja ja kattaa kaikki tehtävät, joissa työskennellään tekstin tai sen sanojen kanssa.

Analyysiosiossa kirjallisuuden ja materiaalin perusteella luodaan 24 tehtävätyyppiä. Tehtävätyyppien lisäksi otetaan huomioon lukutekniikat ja -strategiat, jotka liittyvät joustaviin lukutapoihin, tekstin tarjoamiin ulkoisiin vihjeisiin, vieraista sanoista selviytymiseen sekä tekstien rakenteeseen.

Tutkimusaineiston perusteella voidaan todeta, että kaikkien kolmen kirjan välillä oli eroja, mutta eniten eroja syntyi kahden lukiokirjan ja yhden ammattikoulukirjan välille. Lukiokirjat valmentavat ylioppilaskokeisiin, kun taas ammattikoulun kirja valmentaa työelämän kielenkäyttötarpeisiin. Myös kirjojen erilaiset kielitaidon tavoitetasot näkyvät tehtävien valinnassa. Toisaalta jotkin tehtävätyypit olivat suosittuja kaikissa kirjoissa. Tutkimuksessa selvisi myös, ettei mikään kirja opeta eri lukutaidon osa-alueita ja eri lukutekniikoita ja –strategioita täydellisesti, vaan kaikki kolme kirjaa kaipaavat ainakin jollakin osa-alueella täydennystä.

Avainsanat: lukutaito, lukeminen, oppikirja-analyysi, lukustrategiat, englannin kielen opetus

1 Introduction

The English language has an important role in the Finnish comprehensive school, and in vocational and upper secondary schools after that. Nearly everyone studies it. Because of its status as the language of international communication, English is needed in various fields and occupations, and a good command of English is vital for more and more professionals. As David Eskey (2005, 563) points out, many students rarely speak English in their everyday lives, but they need to read various texts in English to access information they need, since so much information is exclusively available in English. This does not apply only to students, but also to an ever-widening group of professionals. As international contacts are forged at an increasing rate in all professional fields, written communication in English – the modern-day *lingua franca* – increases as well (for the general situation in the use of English in Finland, see Leppänen et al. 2011). Good reading and writing skills are therefore extensively useful and should be cherished in language education.

In my thesis, I will study how three secondary education course books teach literacy, the ability to read and write. My material is from *English Update Course 1* and *Open Road Course 1,* used in the first course of English in Finnish upper secondary school, and *Log In!*, a book for the English course in Finnish vocational school. Since English is both an international language as well as a second local language in many countries, and it is taught worldwide with various teaching materials, previous studies have considered the materials an important area of

critical inquiry (Lähdesmäki 2004, 273). For example Luukka et al. (2008) have established that 93 % of teachers think the teaching material guides teaching, thus showing that is essential to examine the materials. This study continues the tradition of critical analysis of teaching materials.

Traditionally, language competence has been divided into four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. All the four skills should have a sufficient presence in the exercises of any course book because they are all needed in successful communication. My study focuses on the teaching of the reading and writing skills in the form of literacy exercises. I aim to answer the following research questions:

- What type of literacy exercises do the books employ?
- Is there variation between the three books and if there is, how much and what kind of variation?
- What do the literacy exercises tell about the ways the three books teach different reading skills and strategies?

I will study the different literacy exercises in *English Update Course 1*, *Open Road Course 1* and *Log In!* and classify them. The frequency and variation of different exercise types and especially variation between the three books are my main interests. As a basis for the analysis, I will draw on the typology of exercises in Penny Ur's book *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory* (2000) and *Teaching Adult Literacy Principles and Practice* (2010), edited by Nora Hughes and Irene Schwab, but I will also complement it with types gathered from the three course books. Since literacy is a wide concept that encompasses numerous skills and strategies, I will also analyse the results from the point of view of these skills and see whether the books develop all the skills and strategies to the same extent.

The study is a course book analysis set in the field of second language teaching. The four skills including the individual skill of reading as well as literacy have been of interest in the field of language teaching – the latter ones, however, to a lesser extent. The course book analysis reveals something about the reality in which teachers teach reading and literacy in English classrooms and how that reality reflects the ideas put forward in the research in this field.

My research offers insight into the way course books teach literacy. It can help teachers to assess their teaching materials critically and revise their teaching as well as complement their exercises if necessary. Since reading is very important in building and reinforcing other areas of literacy, such as vocabulary and spelling, it is essential that students have sufficient opportunities and encouragement to read in the foreign language. In fact, the students who read frequently can acquire many skills alongside reading, according to Krashen (1993, 84): he claims that by reading students can "become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style, and become good … spellers." Thus reading appears to be influential in many language-learning areas, making it even more significant.

The structure of the study is as follows: Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework and Chapter 3 discusses the role of English in upper secondary school and vocational school in Finland. Chapter 4 presents the case study of literacy exercises in three course books, first material, then method, and finally results and discussion. Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

2 Theoretical Framework

The key term in my research is *literacy*. For the purposes of this study, it is essential to define *reading* as well. They are both complex concepts with overlapping definitions. I will start with defining literacy and then move on to defining reading, which is central in the definition of literacy. When examining reading I will briefly discuss the history of defining reading, but I will also review the factors that affect our ability to comprehend texts.

2.1 Definition of Literacy

Anne Pitkänen-Huhta establishes the critical importance of literacy in her study of literacy practices in the EFL classroom, when she writes that literacy is "central in education: it is both the target and means of instruction" (Pitkänen-Huhta 2003, 9). The need for literacy in a broader sense is also clear: wherever we turn, "written texts of some kind are part of our lives" (Hamilton 2010, 7), and in Finland, some of these texts are indeed in English. The traditional definition of literacy is to be able to read and write, and it sometimes encompasses numeracy, the ability to count, as well. This, however, is not the whole truth about literacy.

The definition of literacy is fluid, and according to Terrence G. Wiley (2005, 531) there is "no universally accepted definition of literacy." Indeed, in recent years the terms *literacies* and *multiliteracies* have become popular in the field of literacy studies and with these the scholars attempt to "challenge the singular construct of literacy" (Wiley, 2005, 531). Keeping in mind the unsettled nature of literacy, I will now look into some definitions that scholars have put forward.

Pahl and Rowsell (2005, 3) write that "literacy has been regarded as being competent with printed texts – whether that is reading them or writing them." This has been the traditional definition of literacy. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) suggest another, more comprehensive approach: they want to promote literacy as a social practice, because they claim that reading and writing always have a context and a purpose and this, as might be expected, affects the language use. Also Pitkänen-Huhta (2003, 9-10) maintains that in recent studies literacy has been regarded as a practice and not as a skill, as it was traditionally perceived.

Pahl and Rowsell (2005, 3-19) point out that there are several different domains of literacy in life, and the term *literacies* refers to the different ways people use language in different contexts. Hamilton explains that since both reading and writing are always done in context, the context invariably affects the outcome: "skills are shaped by the social contexts, purposes and relationships within which reading and writing are used" (Hamilton 2010, 7). Hamilton (2010, 8) uses the term *literacy as situated social practise* to explain this phenomenon, but essentially the idea is the same as in the term *literacies* put forward by Pahl and Rowsell.

Education For All Global Monitoring Report, a publication commissioned by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, defines literacy as

> the development of a complex set of critical skills that allow people to express, explore, question, communicate and understand the flow of ideas among individuals and groups in quickly changing technological environments (*EFL Global Monitoring Report* 2005, 150).

Because of this multifaceted definition, the term multiple literacies in upheld, since

it can mean "ways of 'reading the world' in specific contexts" (*EFL Global Monitoring Report* 2005, 150). This view is especially useful, since it explicitly points out that literacy, and with it reading, is also the ability to function appropriately and effectively in different situations that require the different skills literacy encompasses.

Hamilton (2010, 8) later points out that in addition to being "a set of functional skills" and "a civilizing tool, allowing people to *access a literary culture,*" it is also "a means of emancipation." UNESCO also mentions the same idea and defines literacy in more detail as

> the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning enabling an individual to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potentials, and to participate fully in the community and wider society (Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme LAMP 2004, 2).

This definition involves using the language skill in a variety of ways. UNESCO's definition makes clear how literacy is the key in enabling people to learn independently and in finding their place in society, which is very close to what Hamilton (2010) calls emancipation.

Much of this is relevant to English language teaching in Finland since a substantial amount of knowledge a student might need in the future are available in English, but students need to be able to access that knowledge and for that they need a good command of English, and especially their reading skills need to be developed. Literacy also enables people to participate in the community, and while it is not absolutely imperative to know English in Finland to take part in the Finnish

community, it is very useful since so much material is available only in English, but it also makes it possible to take part in communities outside Finland.

The various but at least for the most part overlapping definitions of literacy form a challenge for the definition of a literacy exercise. However, The Global Monitoring Report notes that by "attracting a long list of modifiers, 'literacy' has become a debased term" (*EFL Global Monitoring Report* 2005, 150) and that its core, reading, has been undermined by this development. This, they say, has been responded by emphasizing that "*reading,* in the broadest sense of the word, remains integral to the notion of literacy" (ibid., 2005, 150). So even though the definition of literacy is broad and encompasses many areas, the core of literacy, as well as the core of this research, is reading.

2.2 Definition of Reading

Because successful reading is a part of literacy, this demonstrates how important it is to pay attention to the exercises with which students are expected to reach this essential part of literacy in the English language. Indeed, as Carrell writes, "[i]n second language teaching/learning situations for academic purposes . . . reading is paramount" and that "without solid reading proficiency, second language learners cannot perform at levels they must in order to succeed" (Carrell et al. 1988, 1).

A dictionary definition for the verbal noun *reading* is hardly helpful when studying the concept of reading from a pedagogic point of view. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2011), for example, defines *reading* as the "action of perusing written or printed matter; the practice of occupying oneself in this way," which is not an

extensive or thorough definition of this complex process. Thus, many scholars concerned with reading – especially those concerned with reading in a second language – have attempted to give a satisfactory definition of what reading is, seeking at the same time to lay a foundation for teaching reading. I shall now briefly discuss some of the definitions put forward in previous research and some of the factors that affect the process of reading.

One of the most famous and also influential definitions of reading was given by the psycholinguist Kenneth Goodman (2000) who defined reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game in which the reader's task is to guess, or to decode or reconstruct, the message encoded by the writer in the form of graphical components, that is to say, letters and words. Indeed, when the research in the field was scarce, reading was considered to be a passive skill, along with the skill of listening, and it was only through research that the conception of reading shifted from passive to active. Christine Nuttall (1982) describes the shift, pointing out that when reading was considered to be passive, the reader was only a receiver of the knowledge the text contained. She describes this with the metaphor of a jug whose content is then poured into the reader's mind (Nuttall 1982, 5). She criticizes this view along with other scholars, e.g. Grabe (1988), Carrell and Esterhold (1988) and Nunan (1990), because it implies that all the content is in the reader's mind after reading, while in the real world something always gets left out. Nuttall writes that in reality readers actively deduce meaning from what they read. According to her, reading is "not just an active process, but an *interactive* one" (Nuttall 1982, 10). This is now a widely accepted view of the reading process.

Carrell and Eisterhold assess the interactive nature of reading from another point of view. They note that the meaning of the text is not only in the text itself, but the background knowledge of the reader affects the interpretation as well (Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, 73-74). Because of this reciprocity, the reading process can be called interactive. This theory makes it clear that there is a two-way flow of information between the reader and the text. Grabe (1988, 56) describes this this flow as "a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text" and that this is essentially "combining textual information with the information the reader brings to a text."

Carrell and Eisterhold (1988) present *schema theory*, which proffers the idea of schemata, the knowledge stored in the reader's memory that interacts with the information in the text and allows that information to become a part of the information that the reader already possesses. In other words, as Nunan (1990, 33) points out, the theory propounds that "reading is an interactive process between what a reader already knows about a given topic or subject and what the writer writes." Carrell and Eisterhold (1988, 76-81) list several situations in which the previous knowledge the reader has helps to make sense of the text and explain what happens in the text. They also point out that if the reader does not have the appropriate schemata, there will be "various degrees of noncomprehension" (Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, 80) in reading results.

According to schema theory, the nature of schemata is threefold: firstly, sentences activate schemata; secondly, the schemata activated are dependent on the background knowledge and the cultural context of the reader; and thirdly, schemata

are deactivated and new schemata are activated as more information becomes available to the reader. Thus schema theory is important in understanding how the process of reading unfolds. For second language learners this means that not only do they need to have the required schemata, they also need to be able to recognize the "textual cues" to access the "appropriate content schemata" (Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, 81). Carrell and Eisterhold (1988, 82) also note that even though some reading comprehension problems are caused by vocabularies that are too limited or unfamiliarity with complex syntactic structures, teachers need to be especially sensitive to problems that are caused by inability to apply appropriate schemata.

So schema theory is closely linked to understanding what is being read. Understanding itself is actually also a crucial part of reading. Nuttall (2005, 4) claims that "reading has one overriding purpose: to get meaning from a text." It is widely accepted that in the process of reading the reader tries to decode the message the writer has provided as accurately as possible. When we talk about reading fiction, this description naturally has it flaws, since the author is not always aware of the kind of connotations and allusions their work evokes in the reader, but we can accept it as a broad outline for reading in general. Koda (2008, 6) posits that there are three operations that are critical to reading competence and two first ones are decoding and text-meaning construction. Penny Ur (2000, 138) relates the same idea to second language learning and writes in her book *A Course in Language Teaching* that reading a text in foreign language is useful only if it is more than just "translating written symbols into corresponding sounds," or reading aloud, it has to

mean both reading and understanding.

A vast number of factors affect the way the reader decodes the text. I shall now briefly comment on some of the most important ones that Grabe (1988) and Nuttall (2005) mention. Grabe (1988, 58) specifies that there are differences between first language learners and second language learners when it comes to literacy: compared to children learning to read in their mother tongue, the second language learners have a limited vocabulary. Thus to develop their reading skills, they also need to learn vocabulary and this is why vocabulary exercises are included in the definition of literacy exercises in this study. Grabe (1988, 57-58) also points out that studies do not confirm that second language readers transfer their first language reading abilities to the second language context. This means that textbooks should promote literacy skills and strategies widely, because students might not be able to apply what they already know about reading in their mother tongue into the new, second language context.

According to Nuttall (2005, 6) the writer and the reader should have certain things in common; they should for example be able to understand the same language and have an equal or near-equal command of the language. If the text contains a lot of words unknown to the reader, the reader might find it impossible to make sense of it (Nuttall 2005, 6). This is also mentioned by Grabe (1988, 58), who writes that in order to develop fluent reading abilities students must surpass a so-called language ceiling or threshold, which means they need to have a good vocabulary and sufficient knowledge of syntactic structures. So the vocabulary the text uses must match the vocabulary the reader possesses. Naturally there can be

some words that the reader does not understand – a good reader can deduce their meaning from the context – but most of the words should nevertheless be familiar to the reader.

That the vocabulary must suit the reader is rather straightforward, but there are more complex things involved in understanding a text. As Nuttall (2005, 6) points out, the "reader and writer should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works." Also Koda (2008, 6) asserts that assimilation with prior knowledge is one of the core operations in the heart of reading. This is where the schema theory discussed earlier comes into play. If the writer and reader come from different cultures or are separated by a long period of time, they will have different assumptions about the world. In addition, differences in ideologies or worldviews can make understanding more difficult. In short, if the reader does not share the same schemata with the writer, they might not understand the relationships the writer leaves unsaid because the relationships are obvious and clear for them. As David Nunan (1990, 33) notes, many "reading passages can only be adequately comprehended if the reader has the relevant cultural knowledge." Thus the cultural differences, different experiences and indeed, different schemata should get attention when considering successful reading and teaching reading.

2.3 The Definition of a Literacy Exercise

The definition of a literacy exercise is crucial to the study and needs to be discussed. A study of this kind has not been carried out before, so I need to use several sources to define what helps to promote literacy and then define a literacy exercise in this

piece of research. In the following, I will examine different studies carried out in this field and relate them to this study.

Schwab (2010, 154) presents a model for a reading curriculum for teachers who want to develop their students' reading fluency and lists three stages and ways to help learners to become better readers in all the stages:

Before reading

- enabling learners to recognize and utilize genre features to understand and interpret texts;
- assisting learners to use what they already know about the content and context of the text to predict what they are likely to meet when reading it;
- helping learners become conversant with the different styles of reading above, so that they can choose the one most appropriate for their purpose. Now readers often feel they have to read every word of a text to make sense of it.

During reading

- helping learners to recognize that this stage is only one part of effective reading;
- enabling learners to acquire a variety of skills and strategies to decode and comprehend the text

After reading

- encouraging learners to reflect on and be critical of what they read;
- supporting learners to respond to the text. (Schwab 2010, 154)

In essence, Schwab's list gives an idea what teachers should teach when they teach literacy. According to her list *before reading*, students should know the basic features of different genres, they should be able to connect what they read with their previous knowledge of the topic, make predictions about texts, know different reading styles and be able to choose the one that suits their purpose of reading. Her lists *during reading* and *after reading* reveal that different comprehension strategies should also be taught, as well as critical reading and reflection and responding to the text. Also Dennis et al. (2009, 502) encourage meaningful conversations about the

things students have read to develop their literacy. This means that a definition of a literacy exercise should encompass all these things and one literacy exercise can teach any of these skills.

Schwab (2010, 179) has also noted that teaching a combination of comprehension strategies – comprehension monitoring, co-operative learning, using graphic organizers, answering and generating questions, story structure and summarizing – is "likely to be most effective." In addition to this, Schwab (2010, 184-185) lists certain exercises that the teacher can use to assist comprehension of difficult texts. These include text completion, diagram completion, completion activities with disordered text, prediction, underlining or highlighting, labelling, segmenting and making diagrams. She also points out that developing vocabulary is related to literacy and that the reader benefits from the decoding of the word only "if it is already in the reader's oral vocabulary" and that "it is hard for readers to make sense of a written text unless they understand almost all the words" (Schwab 2010, 185).

Hui-Zu (2008) studied the ways students learn vocabulary and concluded that intensive vocabulary exercises are required after encountering a word if the word is to be retained in memory and thus also in the reader's oral vocabulary. If the aim is to widen the students' vocabularies so that they can better make sense of what they read, a wide range of vocabulary exercises is required. Parris and Block (2008, 261) on the other hand note that if students are enabled to use the words they have encountered in a way that is meaningful and personal to them, they are more likely to remember that word. This adds to the range of literacy exercises, since it is

necessary to include exercises that make use of the vocabulary encountered and apply it to the students' daily life and experiences. Other exercise types that help meaning making are for example translation exercises. According to Kozue (1997, 494), especially intermediate and advanced students benefit from these exercises since they help to refine linguistic knowledge and also reinforce their knowledge on vocabulary. Not only can a literacy exercise, then, develop different skills needed in different stages during reading, but it can also develop different comprehension strategies, vocabulary, or linguistic strategies in the target language. These will all be included in the definition of a literacy exercise.

In this study, I define a literacy exercise as an exercise that develops the students' literacy skills. It demands browsing or studying a text. It can also prepare the reader for the text, motivate them to read or make them think about the text they have read. This means that all the activities that are included in this study make students read a text and do something related to it or go back to a text they have read and either find an answer straight from the text or use the text in a creative way. The exercises might also revise the vocabulary of the text or introduce central vocabulary before students read it. The texts can either be actual chapters of the book or shorter texts inside the exercises. I will be careful not to include exercises that focus on listening or pronunciation. I will also exclude all exercises that are not explicitly related to any of the texts in the books: this means, for example, that some exercises that deal with vocabulary are included and some are not.

3 English in Upper Secondary School And Vocational School in Finland

In this section I will first introduce the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and discuss how it affects the books examined in this study. Then I will move on to discuss the national curriculum in upper secondary school and vocational school in Finland. I will also examine the use of course books in Finnish classrooms.

3.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is issued by the Council of Europe and it has significance in the creation of textbooks since it is also employed in the national curriculum in Finland. Next, I will discuss the nature of CEFR and how it relates to this study.

CEFR provides a common basis for all language learners to evaluate their level of proficiency in the language but also sets up the framework for what students need to master in order to communicate and act effectively. In addition, as its name suggests, CEFR also provides a common framework of reference for assessment and evaluation to link the evaluation systems of language proficiency in Europe and elsewhere. The framework was set up in 2001 and since one of the books I examine, *English Update Course 1*, was published already in 1998, it might not take all the points made in CEFR into account. However, the other two books should.

CEFR divides language proficiency into different levels according to the skills

students master, and these reference levels are used in the determination of the aims of the upper secondary education in Finland as well. The six different levels are described broadly in Table 1.

Table 1. CEFR levels (Council of Europe 2001, 24)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Table 1 only contains the general definition of the proficiency levels, but each level has its own detailed description as well. All these descriptions, however, are not relevant to this study and hence not treated here. The target level of Finnish upper secondary school English education is B2 and this level is covered more closely in the following chapter.

3.2 The National Curriculum in Finland

In this section, I will first discuss teaching and learning in upper secondary school in Finland and then in vocational school. I will also examine the demands the national curriculum makes regarding secondary education and its aims in foreign language teaching and learning.

3.2.1 Upper Secondary School

The National Board of Education of Finland has given the guidelines for teaching in the form of a general curriculum that is then defined in municipalities and even further in individual schools. The national curriculum also binds course book writers, since they need to take the curriculum into account when designing the books, and follow its guidelines.

The national curriculum takes into account the conventional division of the language skill into four different sub-skills and states that in every course students need to have opportunities to listen, read, speak and write for different purposes (Opetushallitus 2003, 88). In the description of upper secondary school English the national curriculum uses CEFR to determine the target proficiency level. It is possible to study many different languages in Finnish comprehensive school from

rather early on, and students can choose what they want to study in some limit, but everyone usually studies English either from the third or the fourth grade on, and from the seventh grade on the latest. This makes English one of the languages students have studied the longest when they enter the upper secondary school, and they study English there as A language, which has the highest target levels. In upper secondary school, studying A language includes six compulsory courses and two optional ones. In comparison, B language includes five compulsory courses and two optional ones. Everyone has to study one A language and one B language, and one of these languages has to be either Swedish or Finnish as a foreign language. There are C and D languages as well, but these include only optional courses and are intended as options for those who wish to study more languages. In the case of A language, the level the upper secondary education should aim at is B2.1 in all the four skills. When taking the final matriculation exam, they can choose some other language, such as Swedish or Finnish as a foreign language, as their A language if they wish to, but nevertheless they need to study the compulsory English courses that are designed according to the demands of A language with the target level B2.1 in mind.

The first English course in upper secondary school is focused on students and their world, and the focus is on conversation skills, expressing one's opinion and on oral communication in general (Opetushallitus 2003, 88-89). Even though reading or literacy are not explicitly mentioned in the description of the first course, it does not mean that the development of students' literacy skills is forgotten: the objectives of the whole upper secondary school education state that students should be able to read independently texts from different genres with different subjects and contents

that are a couple of pages long, and they should recognise the intention of the text and the writer, find details from the texts, quickly recognise the contents and the utility value of the text in order to decide whether to read the text more closely or not. This is related to the different reading strategies and different purposes for reading discussed above in chapter 2.3.4. However, when students are on this level, idioms and cultural references in long texts can cause problems for them (Opetushallitus 2003, 201). Both idioms and cultural references are highly culture-related aspects of language and are mastered only on higher levels of proficiency. The definition given by Opetushallitus is very close to the demands CEFR makes for B2 level, but is more detailed.

However broad, CEFR also provides more detailed descriptions on some certain types of reading on B2 level, presented in Table 2.

Table 2. CEFR - reading on B2 level (Council of Europe 2001, 69-71)

Overall Reading Comprehension	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms.
Reading Correspondence	Can read correspondence relating to his/her field of interest and readily grasp the essential meaning.
Reading for Orientation	Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.
Reading for Information and Argument	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.
Reading Instructions	Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in his field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.

Table 2 clearly presents different situations in which different reading styles need to be employed. Combined with the aims of the national curriculum, these are notable goals and indeed cannot be achieved without practising the different skills on every course. Moreover, the course description of the first course also states that the course should reinforce vocabulary knowledge as well as awareness of different structures (Opetushallitus 2003, 88) and this can be done with different kind of literacy exercises as well.

As the description of overall reading comprehension states, students need to able to adapt "style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes" (Council of Europe 2001, 69-71), and this means they need to recognize different reading styles and decide which style to use with each text they encounter. Reading correspondence describes how students should be able to skim efficiently and reading for orientation explicitly mentions scanning for details. Again, reading for information and argument needs a reading style of its own, detailed reading, because the idea is to understand the idea of the text accurately, and that demands thought and time. Detailed reading is needed in reading instructions as well, since the reader has to understand what to do (instructions) and what not to do (warnings). (Council of Europe 2001, 69-71).

3.2.2 Vocational School

English can be part of the compulsory studies the students of vocational schools need to study. Students need to study one foreign language besides Swedish, which is the second official language in Finland. The courses of this foreign language, A

language, are set to be 2 Finnish credit points, which means approximately 80 hours of work. In most cases the foreign language is English, but can be something else as well. If English is studied as the second foreign language in vocational school, B language, the target levels are very low, A1.1 in all the skills. In the case of A language, the targets are higher: the level of A2.2 in listening and reading comprehension and A2.1 in speaking and writing bring students a grade H2 (good), which is the middle one, T1 (satisfactory) being the lowest grade and K3 (excellent) the highest (see for example Opetushallitus 2009, 96-99).

CEFR provides more detailed descriptions on reading on A2 level as well, which is the target level of vocational school A language instruction. In some areas the A2 level is divided into levels A2.1 and A2.2. This is the case with overall reading comprehension, reading correspondence and reading instructions, and for these I included the description of the level A2.2 in table 4 since it is the specific target level of English instruction in vocational school. The descriptions can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. CEFR – reading on A2 level (Council of Europe 2001, 69-71)

Overall Reading Comprehension	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.
Reading Correspondence	Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics.
Reading for Orientation	Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman). Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.
Reading for Information and Argument	Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.

Reading Instructions	Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.

Students need to acquire a lot of reading skills to achieve this level and to get the average grade of H2. They need to be familiar with several basic texts they encounter in real life, such as directions, menus and letters. Without exercises that focus their attention to the specific features of these texts and reinforce their literacy skills, students will not reach this level.

3.3 Importance of Course Books in the Classroom

A course book is the single most important tool both the teacher and the student has (Luukka et al. 2008), so we need to be familiar with it. As Lähdesmäki (2004, 271) observes, many course book analyses are based on the notion that a course book has a great significance for the student, and the influence the book has can be either good or bad. The book can affect what kind of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values students assume (Lähdesmäki 2004, 271). Therefore a close look on the material that can have this big an effect is necessary. Moreover, there is unfortunately little research done in this field in Finland. As Lähdesmäki notes, besides master's theses, the only larger piece of research is Pitkänen-Huhta's dissertation *Texts and Interaction Literacy Practices in the EFL Classroom*. My thesis tries to do its part and bring new information on course books and literacy.

Some researchers have criticized course book analyses because they rarely take into account what really happens in the classroom and the ways in which the book is actually used during the lessons. Pitkänen-Huhta (2003) studied what roles texts

play in the classroom in Finnish context and found out that in English lessons the books have an important function. They are given authority over the subject matter and content of the lessons and respected in teaching (Lähdesmäki 2004, 282). However, Pitkänen-Huhta also emphasizes that in the end, both the teacher and the students can decide how to use the book and to what extent they want to follow its instructions. Some studies have shown that the teacher can actually affect the way with which the content of the book is perceived (Lähdesmäki 2004, 283). These findings bear importance concerning this piece of research as well, since I will include all the literacy exercises in the book into my analysis, but of course some of them might not be treated in the classroom at all or with a different focus, and indeed, an individual student definitely will not do all the exercises because the books can for example include optional reading chapters as well, from which students can choose which one to read. However, Pitkänen-Huhta established in her dissertation that English teachers in Finland tend to appreciate and use the book as a basis for the lessons in considerable amount, so it is not necessary to include a field research on the usage of the book, even though it would naturally bring more depth to the results. The fact that some of the exercises are not dealt with during the course must be acknowledged when analysing the results of this study as well as the fact that at least some of the optional exercises are not done by students studying the book.

4 A Case Study of Literacy Exercises in Three Course Books

In this section I will first discuss my material and explore the books. Then I will move on to discuss the method of this study and present my results. After introducing the results I will discuss my findings in detail.

4.1 Material

The material of the research is collected from the English course books *English Update Course 1*, *Open Road Course 1* and *Log In!.* The first two books are designed for the first course of English in upper secondary education in Finland and the third for the English course in Finnish vocational school. This means that I will be analysing written teaching material that is designed to teach English to Finns who are approximately 16-17 years old. By this time, they will have studied English for about seven years. Naturally, other ages and educational histories are possible as well, especially in vocational schools since there can be a lot of variation in the student body: it is more common to start vocational school later in life than upper secondary school. However, there are upper secondary schools for adult learners as well. Nevertheless, the average student of these books will have completed their comprehensive compulsory education a year before studying these books.

English Update Course 1 (1998) was widely in use in recent years, but has now been out of print a while and has been replaced by new course books. The book, however, presents an interesting case to study because the writers have clearly paid a lot of attention to the versatility of the exercises and have also included interesting extra material in each unit. Because of this, there could be more to read in *English*

Update than in a basic course book. *Open Road Course 1* was published in 2008 and the whole series has recently been finished with the eighth book. *Log In!* (2007) is meant for students in vocational school but it is not meant for any specific field. It covers the whole English course in vocational school and the topics range from travelling to work safety.

4.1.1 English Update Course 1

The exercises in *English Update Course 1* (1998) are divided into two different sections. The first section is divided into four units and it includes all the texts and some of the exercises. Each of the units has three to four chapters, or texts, around one common theme and two optional chapters at the end of each unit. The idea of the optional chapters is that students are allowed to choose which one they study and are actually encouraged to study both of them if they are interested enough. The exercises the optional chapters include are troublesome in the analysis, since some teachers might not allot time for the optional chapters at all. In addition, even if they are studied, most students will choose only one chapter to read and will do the exercises related to that text but not the others. Nevertheless, to get an accurate picture of all the literacy exercises the book offers to students, I have included all these exercises as well in my analysis.

The second section of this book is called the *build up* section and the exercises in this section are closely related to the texts and are meant to reinforce students' knowledge of words, expressions and sentence structures. They are meant for practicing things students have already encountered and to polish their skills

(Kallela et al. 1998, 5).

The first two sections of the book are the most relevant ones for this study. The first one includes the texts and the exercises that immediately precede or follow them, while the second one, the *build up* section, deepens the students' knowledge on vocabulary, expressions and structures. Because of their different function, the exercises in the two sections are somewhat different in nature and some types are clearly more common in one section than in the other.

Grammar has its own section in the book as well, and it is not related to the texts. The index suggests when each part of grammar could be studied along the course. Since grammar is separate and not really related to the texts, I leave it out completely. All the books in this study have separate grammar sections and in no book is the grammar related to the texts, so the decision is clear. Moreover, grammar exercises tend to be somewhat different from the exercises that develop literacy, and would have required even more detailed and intricate list of exercise types suitable for this kind of analysis.

4.1.2 Open Road Course 1

The Open Road series was recently completed with the eighth book and even the first book is fairly recent: *Open Road Course 1* was published in 2008. The book is divided into four themes in a similar fashion to *English Update Course 1*. Each theme has two texts and a game or a song accompanying them. There are exercises related to the texts after each text and sometimes before them as well. Some chapters do not have texts, but have extensive listening sections. These chapters are not included in

this study, and neither are the exercises related to these listening sections.

The book has several sections. After the four themes there is a section called *Travel Guide*, which guides the student to be a better learner. This section does not contain exercises but advice and ideas, so it is excluded from this study. The next section is called *Highway Code* and it is the grammar part of the book. This section is left out as well since the exercises are not related to any text and are indeed a bit different from the exercises relevant to this study - even though there are quite a few text completion exercises, because they are useful with the different verb forms students need to revise during this course.

The next section, however, is included, because the section revises the vocabulary and structures learned from the chapters. This section is called *Service Station* and it is divided into two subsections: *From A to B* and *Vocabulary Revision*. The first one includes pair exercises to be done orally and not all texts have their own exercises. Only the types *translation* and *explain* are present in *From A to B*. *Vocabulary Revision* is a bit more varied, but *text completion* and *search* dominate this part.

4.1.3 Log In!

Log In! is meant for students in vocational school and it covers one language course in English. The book is studied by people approximately the same age as *Open Road Course 1* and *English Update Course 1* and the books should start at the same level of English since they are all studied after comprehensive school. *Log In!* focuses on working English and the revision of basic survival skills in English. The book consists of seven different themes, each of which includes several reading passages

related to the theme and a range of exercises. The themes are the English-speaking world, travelling, jobs, Finland, friends and hobbies, English speaking countries, and information.

The introduction of the book proclaims that the chapters include a lot of different types of exercises (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 3). However, when the writers define what students can practice with these exercises, they do not mention reading skills, but only oral communication, listening comprehension, writing and expanding vocabulary. It is interesting to analyse the exercises since reading is not explicitly mentioned, and this naturally raises the question how much attention reading really gets in the exercises. Naturally literacy skills are nurtured with writing and vocabulary exercises so there will be a lot to analyse, but traditional reading exercises might be scarce if the introduction holds true.

Besides the themes and vocabularies, the book also includes a grammar section. This section again includes some text completion exercises, but in addition a lot of other kind of grammar exercises, which are not defined in this study, so the grammar section is left out from this analysis.

4.2 Method

This study is qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the three course books. It is a text book analysis since the material consists of course books, but it is also a content analysis since the characteristics of different types of content are identified and the content is then systematically categorized and evaluated (Neuendorf 2002, 1). My aim is to identify exercise trends in the course books by defining the types of

exercises they employ. The methods relies on a close reading of the books: I identify all literacy exercises in the books, classify them and see what kinds of exercises the books employ and how much variation there is in the use of different types of exercises within the books and between them.

Content analysis requires the identification and definition of critical variables, and this, as Neuendorf (2002, 96) claims, "is both painstaking and creative." Neuendorf (2002, 96) also points out that a failure "to identify all the form and content variables that distinguish a set of messages can lead to misleading results." This is why the classification of the exercises is under careful consideration. The classification of different exercises enables me to study how common different types of exercises are and see whether some types are more frequent than others.

However, I follow the same guideline as Pitkänen-Huhta (2003, 53): the "data collection begins with a theoretical framework, which guides the investigator's attention to certain aspects of the phenomenon but, importantly, does not regulate or predetermine the collection or analysis of the data." This means that I refined the definitions of exercise types as I proceeded in my analysis: for example, I fine-tuned the differences between *match*, *search* and *text completion* as I analysed the material. The differences are discussed in detail in section 4.3.2. Indeed, the most important tool in this work was polishing the definitions to encompass the wide variety of exercises as well as drawing lines between types. Some types could have been segmented into two or more separate types but that would have needlessly increased the amount of different types and would not have given useful information about the general amount of literacy exercises. Hence, I strove to strike

a balance between having enough but not too many different exercise types. If I did not have enough types, my analysis would not reveal much about the variation or the popularity of the exercises since any one type would encompass a myriad of different exercises while too many different types would not uncover the general tendencies of the popularity of the exercises since only identical exercises would form a type. The unit of data collection is an individual exercise.

My analysis is descriptive in that I aim to describe the types of literacy exercises and their variability in each book, but the analysis is not intended to be univariate: I also compare the books, look at the exercises from the point of view of reading for different purposes and suggest ways to complement the books so that the literacy instruction in the classroom would be as comprehensive as possible.

The reliability of the study depends on the accurate and detailed description of each exercise type and the reliable categorization of the data analysed. Since a study like this has not been conducted before, I have paid particular attention to these two details. The content validity and the face validity of the study are also good. Neuendorf (2002) defines content validity as "the extent to which the measure reflects the full domain of the concept being measured." In this study, I have defined a literacy exercise exhaustively by taking all the different perspectives into account and thus warranting a high content validity. Neuendorf (2002, 115) defines face validity as "the extent to which a measure … seems to tap the desired concept." The aim of the study is to know more about the distribution and variety of different literacy exercises in the three course books and the study yields findings about the issue.

4.3 Results

In this section, I will discuss the findings in each course book separately. I will unfold my findings starting from the amount of literacy exercises in each book, and continuing to the most common types and the variation inside each type. First, however, it is essential to discuss the classification of the exercises and the types I will be using in this study.

4.3.1 My Classification of the Exercises

The classification of the exercises is a fundamental part of the study, and I will now discuss it in more detail. Penny Ur (2000, 146) discusses teaching reading and after considering comprehension questions, the basic reading exercises, she encourages the teachers to list further reading activities on their own and gives some suggestions of her own. A good source for further ideas is Schwab (2010), which offered not only reading theories but also concrete tips on how to promote better literacy skills and to assist adults into acquiring them. The exercise types used in this study are a compilation of Ur's list, Schwab's suggestions and my own ideas. The types of exercises used in this study are listed in Table 4 and discussed in greater detail in section 4.3.2.

Table 4. The types of literacy exercises in the literature and the data

Comprehension questions	Traditional reading exercise with questions for which answers can be found in the text.
Open questions	Questions that demand some interpretation or reading between the lines, i.e. the answers cannot be found from the text as such.

Pre-questions	General questions before the text that the learners have to find an answer to. The information they are looking for should be "central to the understanding of the text" (Ur 2000, 146). This type of exercise can also test students' previous knowledge about the issue.
Do-it-yourself questions	Students produce questions of their own and then answer them.
Multiple choice	Students are presented with several items from which they choose the appropriate alternative. These can be realized in many ways, but they all have the same form nevertheless.
True or false	Students choose between two or more items, and decide whether they are true or false.
Provide a title	This type is especially useful when the text has no original title, but can be used with any text so that students suggest an alternative title.
Summarise	Students summarise the text. With this exercise students can practice understanding and finding the essence of the text.
Continue or preface	Both demand a text that is a story and can be continued. In *preface* students tell what they think has happened before and in *continue* they continue the text.
Text completion	Traditional cloze: students fill in missing words, phrases or sentences. Students can be offered a list to choose from or a translation, but Schwab (2010, 184) notes that "ideally learners should be allowed a free choice of words to ensure engagement with meaning."
Gapped text	Students fill in gaps in the text. Ur describes the exercise as different from the traditional cloze test that tests students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In gapped text, however, towards "the end of the text, four or five gaps are left that can only be filled if the text has been understood" (Ur 2000, 146).
Mistakes in the text	There are a certain amount of mistakes in the text towards the end, and students are told to look for them. Since the amount of the mistakes is known from the beginning, it might be challenging to look for wrong or intrusive words or omissions, but it would not be impossible.
Respond	This can be used especially when the text is a letter or a provocative article. Students discuss how they would respond or actually write their response. It may also mean they have to take the role of someone in the text and act like they imagine these people would act.
Re-presentation of the content	This type of exercise has many different variations and it can be used with texts that give information of tell a story. Students re-present the content for example with the help of pictures, colours, mind maps, keywords or diagrams.

Match or arrange	Students match elements with other elements, for example pictures and texts or titles and texts and arrange passages or pictures into the right order.
Search	Students look for certain elements from the text and for example underline them.
Expressing opinion	Students express their own opinion on the matters discussed in the text or talk about the new information the text has provided. They may also talk about the matters before reading the text.
Translation	Students translate certain elements such as words, phrases or sentences into Finnish or English.
Making diagrams	Students "construct diagrams to show relationships e.g. flow diagrams, mind maps" (Schwab 2010, 185) or time lines. It can also mean filling in tables.
Segmenting	Students "break up text into paragraphs or logical sections" (Schwab 2010, 185).
Prediction	Students predict what comes next, be it items of vocabulary or parts of text.
Correction	Students correct faulty sentences that are either not in accordance with the text or grammatically incorrect. This type also includes the exercises in which students change sentences in some way.
Explain	Students explain items of vocabulary or create sentences around given words (explaining how they can be used in sentences). They might also explain what happens in a picture.
Imagine	Students expand the theme further by writing or talking about it. They may also create something totally new that is only loosely related to the text. The exercises that demand students to apply things from the chapter to their life and surroundings are also inside this type.

The types *pre-questions*, *do-it-yourself questions*, *provide a title*, *summarise*, *continue or preface*, *gapped text*, *mistakes in the text*, *respond* and *re-presentation of the content* are from Ur's book, *text completion*, *making diagrams*, *segmenting* and *prediction* from Schwab's article and the rest are compiled by looking at the material of the research.

4.3.2 Discussion on the Exercise Types

Some of the types require more clarification and in this section I discuss the potential overlap and the differences between the types, which I later rely on when classifying the exercises in my material. The definitions given here are my own and are based on the definitions given in Table 1, the list of exercise types used in this study.

4.3.2.1 The Difference between Comprehension Questions *and* Open Questions

The first two types, *comprehension questions* and *open questions* are very similar in nature, but are nevertheless fundamentally different, and this is why they are included as separate types altogether, and not for example as subtypes of one category. This difference has been made in previous research as well. Schwab (2010, 182) discusses different types of comprehension questions when she introduces questions-answer relationship approach, or QAR, developed in the late 1970s by Taffy Raphael. According to Schwab, QAR can help in developing students' comprehension skills and it divides questions into three types:

- Right there questions: the answer is directly stated in the text
- Think and search questions: the reader must search and combine information from different parts of the text to find the answer.
- On my own questions: this requires the use of prior knowledge combined with text information. (Schwab 2010, 182).

The first two categories, right there questions and think and search questions, are the ones I have defined as *comprehension questions*, while the last category, on my own questions, is the one I call *open questions*. In the first two QAR exercise types the answers can indeed be found from the text, even though the second type

requires more thought and perhaps combining ideas on the part of the reader than the first one. In the third one the idea is for the readers to "use their own ideas and experiences to answer the questions" or "think about how the text and what they already know fit together" (Schwab 2010, 182-183). Thus, the definition of third QAR exercise type matches the definition of *open questions* in this study.

Ur does not differentiate between *comprehension questions* and *open questions*, but discusses good and bad comprehension questions. As she (Ur 2000, 143) points out, sometimes comprehension questions test more the ability to recognize the grammar context than actual comprehension, and this is why some of them are less useful. This type of questions are very close to QAR's right there questions. *Open questions* in turn really test comprehension since the answers cannot be found word to word from the text and they might even only be implied. Ur (2000, 144) calls these good comprehension questions. When doing this kind of exercises the student has to paraphrase, interpret the situation and apply background knowledge to answer the questions (Ur 2000, 144). "They thus demand real comprehension, and encourage an interactive, personal 'engaging' with the text, as well as being more interesting to do," she points out (Ur 2000, 144). There can even be many different answers that are all correct and therefore the text offers a basis for discussion of different alternatives.

4.3.2.2 The Difference between Text Completion, Search *and* Match

Text completion, *search* and *match* need to be defined more closely as well. *Text completion* demands a whole text that is missing words or sentences but it does not

need to be the actual chapter – the exercise can include the text in need of completion. An exercise with seemingly unrelated sentences can also be regarded as *text completion* if the words that are to be used in the completion are already given in English without inflections or in Finnish to be translated. However, if the words that should be used are given separately and the text consists of unrelated sentences, the exercise is treated as *match*. The exercise is also *match* if the idea is to match words with their translations. The exercise is labeled *translate* if the translations are not given but need to be written by students. *Search*, on the other hand, includes finding something straight from the text. It can be about the ideas presented in the text but also about certain words, for example a crossword puzzle with clues in English and the words can be found from the text.

4.3.2.3 The Difference between Respond *and* Imagine

Respond and *imagine* are rather similar as well. In *respond* students take part in the text somehow, either respond as themselves or get involved as characters. *Respond* allows them to take different roles and makes them think about the issue the text presents from different angles. *Imagine*, however, might only be loosely related to the text or it can expand the theme further. For example an exercise in which students design their own computer game and present it to others after reading a text about a man who likes to play computer games is clearly expanding the theme and thus an example of the exercise type *imagine*, while when they need to take the role of one of the characters in the text and write a letter or a note to another character, they are responding to the text.

4.3.2.4 The Difference between Search *and* Imagine

I noticed that in *Log In!* there were quite a few exercises that told students to make a list of some kind, either by searching the things from the text or just by thinking about different subjects and finding the words from vocabularies or dictionaries. If students are instructed to find the words from the text, I labelled it *search*, such as searching for household appliances from the text (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 107), but if they needed to make lists just by thinking about the issue, such as compiling a list of things made of paper (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 89), I labelled it *imagine*.

4.3.2.5 Amount of variation inside one exercise type

Some of the types are broader than others, because they allow more variation inside the type. For example *multiple choice, re-presentation of the content* and *match or arrange* can have many realizations while *summarise* and *provide a title* are rather unvarying as types. This will be taken into account when evaluating the variation in the book, since there can still be some variation inside one type, as long as the type allows it, and thus a purely quantitative study might not reveal the whole truth.

4.3.3 Reading for Different Purposes

There are different ways of reading, and these different ways are crucial in becoming a good reader. Besides opportunities and experiences of working with texts, students also need knowledge of different reading skills and strategies. In this chapter I will discuss these strategies in more detail.

When students read in their free time, they read for a reason. They might be reading to be entertained, reading to gain knowledge or reading to find a certain

piece on information. The National Reading Panel states that "reading is purposeful and active. A reader reads a text to understand what is read and to put this understanding into use" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 2000, 4-5). All these reasons for reading demand different ways of reading: since reading informational and literary texts is different from following instructions, they must be read in different ways. These different ways of reading need to be taught as well, because even though students already know how to read in their mother tongue, they might not be aware of different reading styles.

Christine Nuttall (1983, 31-32) writes about different reading skills and strategies and defines them in detail. The broad outline of the skills and strategies needed in reading is as follows:

> (a) Skills involving flexibility of technique: variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning, study reading, etc. …
> (b) Skills of utilizing information that is not strictly speaking part of the text itself: reference, apparatus, graphic conventions, illustrations and diagrams …
> (c) Word-attack skills: how to tackle unfamiliar lexical items by using morphology, inference from context, etc., or by using a dictionary …
> (d) Text-attack skills: the process of interpreting the text as a whole, using all the clues available including cohesion and rhetorical structure … (Nuttall 1983, 31-32).

Nuttall (1983, 31) mentions the term study reading, which means reading a text carefully to understand the idea of the text accurately and remember it later. In this study, study reading is called *detailed reading.* In the next chapter I will define the other two other flexible reading techniques Nuttall names, i.e. skimming and scanning, and then in the following chapters I will discuss the implications of the skills and strategies Nuttall lists in relation to this study and the exercise types I

have defined.

4.3.3.1 Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning that Nuttall (1983, 31) mentions in relation to flexibility of reading technique have been researched in the field of second language teaching. Among others, Jing Ding (2008, 24-28) discusses scanning and skimming and defines the different skills these reading types require, but for the purposes of this study it is enough to note the difference between skimming and scanning and how they might be beneficial to learners.

Although both skimming and scanning mean reading something fast, they are different in nature. Skimming can be used to get the main idea of the text or to build up background knowledge: it is "a way of covering materials quickly" (Ding 2008, 25). Scanning on the other hand aims at finding certain facts or details from the text and involves the use of key words in locating the right passage (Ding 2008, 26). According to Ding (2008, 24-25) both skills are useful when for example reading for book exams, when faced with a lot of material to familiarize oneself with, when studying (abroad) and when browsing the internet in search of something specific.

Different motivations for learning are also mentioned by Yvon Appleby (2010, 37-38). The motivations can be seen as reasons for reading as well and are related to the possible uses of skimming and scanning Ding mentions. The first two reasons Appleby (2010, 37) mentions are "gaining particular subject knowledge" and "improving wider skills and learning about learning." The first one is clearly related to reading for exams and getting background knowledge, which Ding mentions in

relation to skimming, and the second motivation also bears some resemblance to Ding's ideas.

The third reason, however, has been paid little attention to in other studies but I find it rather important to Finnish students because it is related to the social use of English and, in the case of Finnish youth, on-line networking. Appelby's (2010, 37) third motivation is "making social contacts and developing new social networks and skills." Most students of upper secondary school have access to the internet and they use it regularly, 76 % of the youth aged from 16 to 24 use the internet many times a day (SVT), and a growing number also attends chat rooms and news groups regularly. They may bond with people from all over the world and for that they need English. Most of the communication is still in written form, even though applications like Skype make it possible and cheap to talk to someone who is half across the globe. For this communication to be fruitful, students need to be literate in English.

To sum up, skimming, scanning and detailed reading are needed when one has to deal with written English materials a lot, and since this indeed seems to be the future of the Finnish students as well, the materials used to teach English should prepare them for this.

4.3.3.2 Reading Skills and Strategies in the Literacy Exercise Types

The literacy exercise types presented in chapter 2.3.2 are related to the different skills and strategies reading demands, presented above in 2.3.4. Some exercise types can develop these skills, and in the following chapters I will discuss these in more detail, that is, combine the skills and strategies with potential exercise types.

4.3.3.2.1 Flexible Techniques in the Literacy Exercise Types

I will now briefly analyse which flexible reading techniques, namely skimming, scanning and detailed reading, they employ. *Comprehension questions* can develop both skimming and scanning skills, since they can be about the main idea of the text (skimming) or finding details from the text (scanning). QAR's think and search type of comprehension questions also demand detailed reading to get an accurate understanding of the ideas presented in the text. A good course book would contain questions that reinforce all these skills. Also *do-it-yourself questions* can help in developing these skills, but naturally the abilities the questions test depend on the students who design the questions.

Multiple choice will mostly develop and test scanning abilities since students need to find one certain piece of information from the text. However, some multiple choice exercises might test skimming or detailed reading, especially if the questions are about the main points of the text. This is even more so with *true or false*.

Both *provide a title* and *summarise* test students' ability to read the text carefully to get the main content before providing a (new) title or summarising the main content of the text and this is when detailed reading is needed. Also *continue or preface* demand detailed reading of the text. *Text completion* and *gapped text* might demand skimming, but they nurture the skill of detailed reading even more so.

Match or arrange and *search* on the other hand demand scanning skills and at their best enhance the skill. Students need to find certain elements from the text and either connect them with synonyms, antonyms, translations or phrases with similar meaning. Since *re-presentation of the content* is a broad exercise type, it can

encompass many different individual exercises and cannot as such be labelled as an exercise that develops either skimming or scanning. Inside this type each exercise needs to be analysed one by one.

4.3.3.2.2 Clues Outside the Text

Texts offer a range of information outside the actual text: students can look at spacing, indentation, layout, variation in type-face, use of symbols and most importantly titles, table of contents, pictures, diagrams and foreword (Nuttall 1982, 42-52).

It can be invaluable for students to learn to evaluate texts in advance, especially if they need to read a lot and they have to be able to decide whether the text is worth reading at all. Especially the table of contents and foreword help in this task. Nuttall (1982, 47) writes that if the student can efficiently decide what is useful for his or her purposes, they will "save … a lot of time that might have been spent on unproductive reading." The table of contents, foreword and looking through titles and possible pictures and diagrams can give clues to the reader, but the reader needs to be taught to interpret the clues. Especially useful tasks are pre-questions that are designed to focus students' attention to these features. Also *mistakes in the text*, *search, respond, imagine* and *prediction* could be harnessed to help students pay attention to these clues either before reading or after reading.

4.3.3.2.3 Tackling Unfamiliar Words

There will always be new words that students do not know, and they need to learn to cope with that. It is important that they try to guess the meaning somehow

(Nuttall 1982, 69-72) or search it from a dictionary (Nuttall 1982, 78-79), and not just skip the word even if it were crucial to understanding the message of the text or, even worse, stop reading altogether. These skills can easily be practised with *match*, *search* or *multiple choice*. *Translation* may help as well, even though it most likely demands the use of a dictionary or at least the word lists provided for each chapter. However, explicit attention to these skills is needed, otherwise it is too easy to just browse the vocabulary provided to find the right word.

Nuttall (1982, 67-68) points out that it is just as important to teach students to recognize the morphological information the words themselves offer. Tabatabaei (2011) studied the relationship between the size of students' vocabularies and morphological awareness and found a strong correlation between the two. He recommends teachers to introduce morphological knowledge to students, initially giving "explicit instruction and then gradually the leaners can apply their morphological awareness automatically when faced with new vocabulary that has the possibility of morphological analysis" (Tabatabaei 2011, 270). It is useful to know for example the possible affixes different parts of speech can get. Good inference skills are needed as well, since they can save time if the student does not need to check each unfamiliar word from a dictionary but can infer the meaning of the word from its context. Inference could be practised with *match or arrange*, *true or false* and *text completion*. Exercises that would clearly train students' morphological awareness do not fall nicely into any of the exercise types relevant to this study, but *match* could be used in some cases as well as filling in tables which is under the type *making diagrams*.

4.3.3.2.4 Structure of Texts

The exercises should also promote awareness of the structure of texts. Students should be familiarized with different cohesive devices such as referencing, ellipsis and lexical cohesion, as well as the rhetorical structure of different types of texts, such as how paragraphs are formed and how the content is organized, but also with discourse markers and possible underlying presuppositions (Nuttall 1982, 82-120).

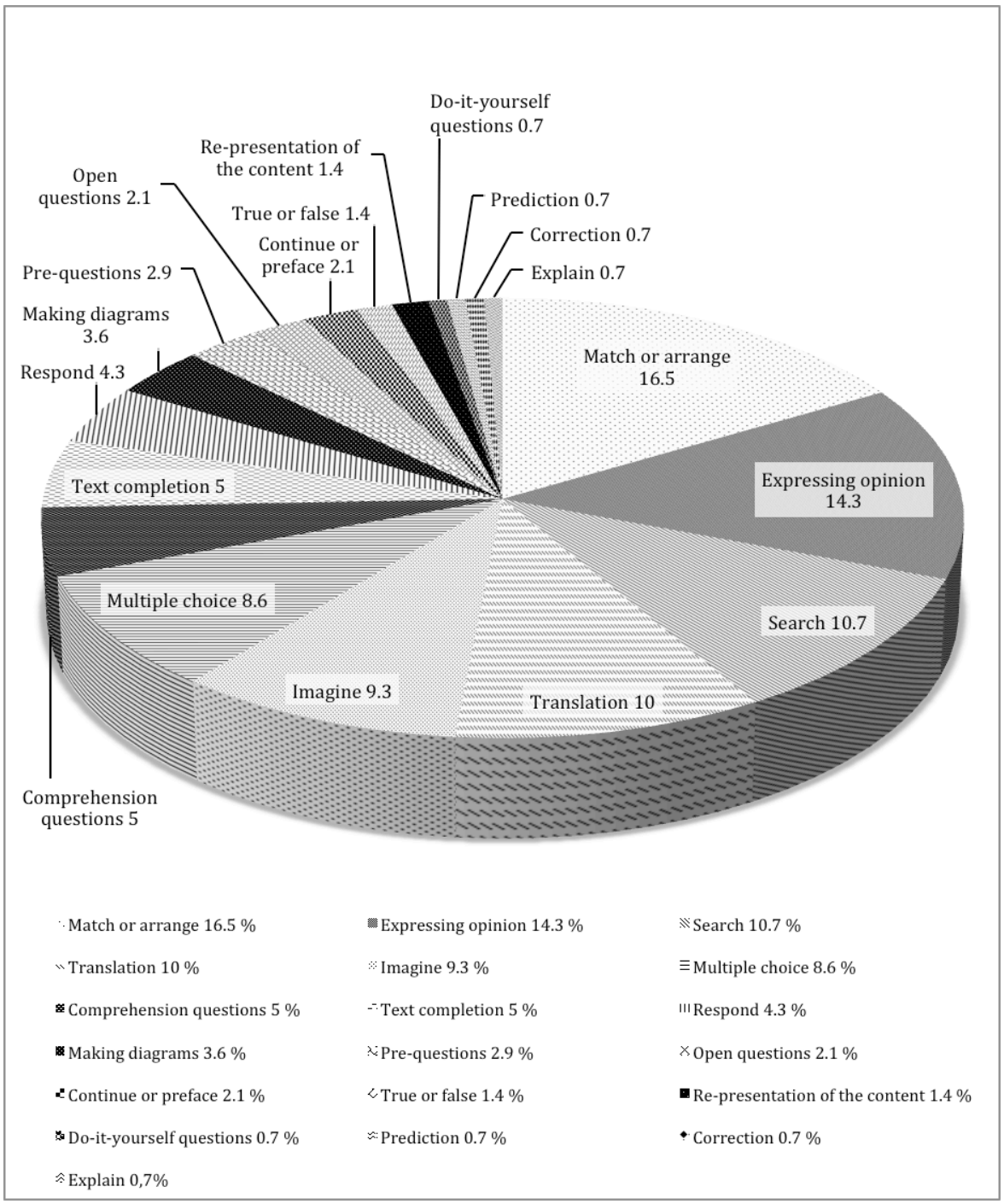
The exercises that help bring about this awareness should focus on the structural side of the texts, and could be for example *provide a title*, *summarise*, *continue or preface*, *gapped text*, *mistakes in the text*, *match or arrange*, *making diagrams*, *segmenting* and *prediction*. This is a long list and proves that it is not difficult to make exercises to pay special attention to the structure of texts.

4.3.4 English Update Course 1

In total, there are 140 exercises in the book that are included in this study and 19 exercise types out of 24 types are used. *Segmenting*, *mistakes in the text*, *gapped text*, *summarise* and *provide a title* are not present, while the other types are with differing representations varying from 16.5 % to less than one per cent. *Match or arrange*, *expressing opinion*, *search*, *translation*, *imagine*, *multiple choice*, *comprehensive questions*, *text completion* all have a percentage higher than 5, while *respond*, *making diagrams*, *pre-questions*, *open questions*, *continue or preface*, *true or false*, *re-presentation of the content*, *do-it-yourself questions*, *prediction*, *correction* and *explain* all a percentage less than 5. In *English Update Course 1*, the most common exercise types are *match or arrange, search, expressing opinion* and

translation and they form more than half of all the literacy exercises, while the other 15 types form the other half. These figures reveal that literacy exercises are fairly unevenly apportioned among different types. The distribution of the exercises is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Exercise types in *English Update Course 1*



The most common type, *match or arrange*, is rather varied in the book, especially in terms of what students are asked to match. To start with, the most common things to match are words and their explanations (Kallela et al. 1998, 32, 35, 71, 130, 140,

141, 154), which constitute 30 % of all the matching exercises. An example of this is exercise B after the first optional text of the book (example 1).

(1) *Match each word with a suitable explanation.*

1	scared	_____	**A**	*sth that breaks the rule*
2	disgust	_____	**B**	*opposite of fat*
3	recognize	_____	**C**	*hopeless*
4	grip	_____	**D**	*way of speaking*
5	bury	_____	**E**	*cause a strong feeling of dislike*
6	autograph	_____	**F**	*know again*
7	desperate	_____	**G**	*person's signature*
8	slim	_____	**H**	*frightened*
9	accent	_____	**I**	*tight hold*
10	exception	_____	**J**	*cover up, put underground*

(Kallela et al. 1998, 32.)

Other items to be matched for example are titles with texts (Kallela et al. 1998, 34), expressions with similar phrases (Kallela et al. 1998, 74) and words with the right part of speech (Kallela et al. 1998, 153). These are mostly vocabulary related exercises and test students' ability to recognize words they have just seen in the text and then use them appropriately. The exercises develop their literacy skills so that the next time they encounter the word they will know what it means or can even adopt it as a part of their active vocabulary. The place of the *match or arrange* exercises is interesting. For the most part, these exercises are after the text and the initial reading comprehension exercise, such as *multiple choice* or *comprehension or open questions*, as is the case with the example above. Exercise B on page 32 is also after comprehension questions that test whether the content of the short story has been understood. In one occasion, however, the vocabulary matching exercise is before the text so students know what kind of phrases and vocabulary to expect

(Kallela et al. 1998, 74). The usual place is explained by the research, since studies show that students learn words better if they are asked to do something with the words they have encountered while reading than if they merely read them (Hui-Tzu 2008, 78-79). Hui-Tzu (2008) studied different ways to learn vocabulary and concluded that to retain words better, students should do intensive vocabulary exercises after encountering the words in a text. In *English Update*, students' understanding of what they have read is tested right after they have read the text and then they are encouraged to work with the vocabulary they encountered to retain it.

Mostly, matching deals with vocabulary items, words, phrases and descriptions, but it includes some instances of different kind of matching as well, but these other kinds of matching and arranging exercises are clearly a minority. In one matching exercise students have read a text with eight short portraits and are later asked to match three endings to appropriate stories (Kallela et al. 1998, 94). In one arranging exercise students arrange sentences in the same order as in the story they have read (Kallela et al. 1998, 102). This is the only exercise in the book in which students need to arrange anything and it is after an optional text.

Expressing opinion is the second most common exercise type with the percentage of 14,3. In *expressing opinion* students are for example asked to choose the description they like the best after reading short portraits of different people and then asked to state their reasons (Kallela et al. 1998, 94). Before a chapter that describes the personalities of the first-born, the middle-born, the youngest and the only child, students are asked whether they agree or disagree with the descriptions,

and they are asked to pay special attention to their own description (Kallela et al. 1998, 84). Discussion questions are a common way to make students express their opinions, as in example 2, focusing on first impressions:

(2) *Talk about the following ideas either with your partner or in class as a whole.*
1. What is the first thing you notice about a person?
2. How can you create a good first impression?
3. Can you trust first impressions?
4. Do you believe in love at first sight?
5. What places can you think of in which strangers may start talking? (Kallela et al. 1998, 20.)

Other exercises of this type include for example listing advantages and disadvantages of having two nationalities (Kallela et al. 1998, 45), choosing the places they would like to visit in London (Kallela et al. 1998, 71) and deciding what kind of people wear the shoes in the pictures (Kallela et al. 1998, 91).

The exercise type *search*, which constitutes 10.7 %, includes for example finding synonyms from the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 66, 102, 138, 145, 147, 151), underlining certain elements (Kallela et al. 1998, 47, 86) and filling in key phrases to complete some sentences related to the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 42, 124). The most common things to search, however, are definitely synonyms. This is useful for students since they will need knowledge of synonyms in the Matriculation Exam, in which synonyms are a widely used way of not making the multiple choice options too easy.

Translation is very unvaried as a type and mostly includes translating sentences from Finnish into English and some from English into Finnish (Kallela et al. 1998, 126, 129, 133, 137, 139, 150, 155, 159). All the instances of *translation* except for

one can be found from the *build up* section of the book. The only one that is not in that section is about translating a cartoon that actually functions as the text in this case, since the rest of the exercises on the following page are related to a listening passage (Kallela et al. 1998, 108). There are also a couple of instances of translating short phrases (Kallela et al. 1998, 147, 151). Translation then, is used quite often, since one tenth of all the literacy exercises are translation exercises. They are also very traditional exercises. This section could be made more varied with differing instructions – some exercises could for example be completed orally. It is important to notice, though, that *translation* as a type is useful. Indeed, Kozue (1997, 494), who has studied how students resolve translation problems, asserts that "translation tasks for the advanced and/or intermediate students are good for refining, improving, and expanding linguistic knowledge" and they "enable the learners to use the target language generatively and creatively, and make them aware of correct L1/L2 correspondences not only in words and structures but also in register and context." Even though traditional, *translation*, then, has its place in the books.

Multiple choice is reasonably common with 8.6 %, and as an exercise it is easily variable and this is taken into account in *English Update*. The exercises vary in the amount of choices (from two to four) and in the task itself. Some might ask students to pick the best alternative (Kallela et al. 1998, 35), the one that does not correspond with the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 26) or the two things that are true according to the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 76). All in all, the exercises that are included in *multiple choice* vary quite a lot, and actually no two exercises are exactly alike, so the variation aspect seems to be taken into account at least inside this type.

The difference between *comprehension questions* and *open questions* demanded some deliberation, but the division appears to be functional. A good example of *comprehension questions* is example 3:

(3) 1 What are the different 'backgrounds' that Solveig has?
2 Where was she born?
3 Where is her mother from?
4 Where is Solveig now? (Kallela et al. 1998, 47.)

Even though the questions are rather straightforward, for the most part students have to tell the answers in their own words, because the answer for example to question three is presented like this in the text: "my mother's Finnish and my father is English Canadian" (Kallela et al. 1998, 45). The only part in text that has the same sentence structure and wording as the question is the answer to question two.

There are only three instances of *open questions*. The first *open questions* are in unit one, chapter three, where there is a poem and questions after it. The questions for example ask students to decide how old the woman and the man in the poem are and justify their decisions. In the poem, there are no visible indicators of age, so students really need to interpret the poem and use their experience of the world to determine the ages of the man and the woman. (Kallela et al. 1998, 21.) It also provides an interesting topic for discussion or even debate.

Continue and preface sometimes occur with *respond* or *imagine* in the same exercises, and students can choose whether they want to for example continue the story, imagine what happened before or after the situation in the text (*preface and continue*) or they can write something related to the story such as a description of a person or a place (*imagine*) or write a letter to someone or a diary entry by someone

in the text (*respond*). A good example of this is example 4:

(4) Write a short continuation to the story or write a short newspaper article called Ebony-Tressed Thief. (Kallela et al. 1998, 102)

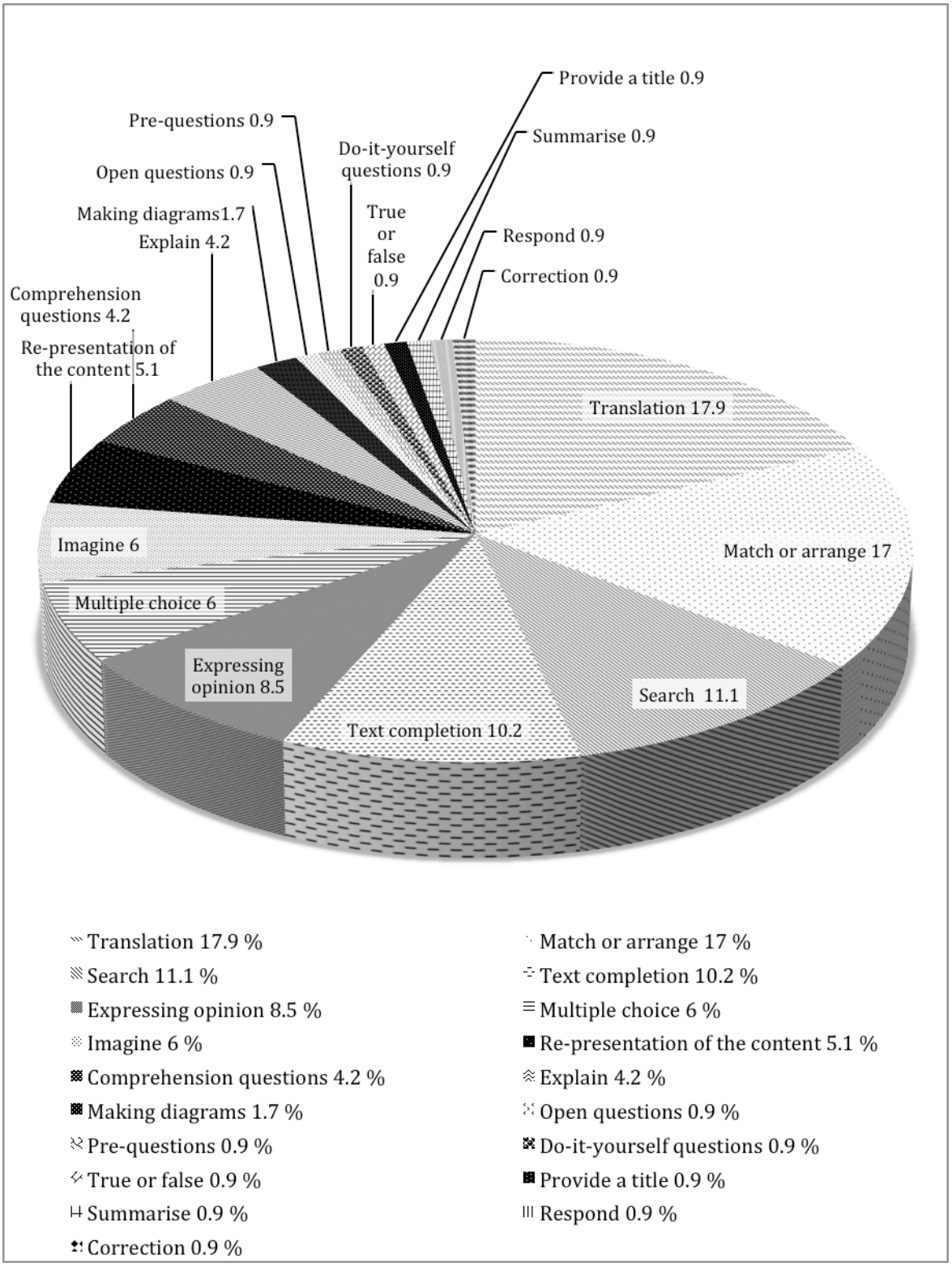
In this exercise the first part is clearly the type *continue*, but the latter part demands some imagining on the part of the students: they need to look at the story they have read from a journalist's point of view and write their article about the acts of the clever thief. These are counted as two separate exercises, in this case *continue* and *imagine.*

The most common types are rather varied in *English Update* with the exception of *translation* and *search* to some extent. *Match or arrange* as well as *expressing opinion* are well varied, as is *multiple choice,* which is even more varied than expected. It seems to be rigid in its form, students choose the most suitable answer, but the writers of the book have made the exercise type internally varied by changing the amount of options as well as the parameters for choosing one's answer.

4.3.5 Open Road Course 1

In total, there are 117 exercises in the book that are included in this study and 19 exercise types out of 24 types are present. The most common types are *translation*, *match or arrange*, *search*, *text completion* and *expressing opinion*. These are very much the same as in English Update, but the order is slightly different. The distribution of the exercises is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Exercise types in *Open Road Course 1*



Translation is the most common type, but is it surprisingly varied in *Open Road Course 1. Translation* exercises vary from "[e]xplain in Finnish what these sentences mean" (McWhirr et al. 2008, 11) to translating questions, phrases and words and even one's favourite recipe. Naturally the traditional sentence translation is also prominently present, especially in *Service Station Form A to B*, but also in the exercises after the chapters and two examples can be found from the *Service Station Vocabulary Revision* as well. *Translation*, then, is clearly more varied in *Open Road* than in *English Update* and includes several types of translation exercises from translating sentences to explaining in one's own words what certain sentences in the text mean.

Match proved to be somewhat varied, but nevertheless matching words to phrases or sentences and words with their translations constitute half of the occurrences of this type. The other matching exercises are for example matching pictures to texts, pictures to other pictures, words to synonyms, words to right categories and words to their opposites.

In percentages *translation* and *match or arrange* have a big lead – the next ones have the percentages of 11.1 and 10.2 compared to the staggering 17.9 % and 17 % of *translation* and *match or arrange*. These next two are *search* and *text completion*, respectively. The top four are not very unpredictable, since all the exercise types are used a lot in *Service Station*, and it revises both structures and vocabulary of the texts. *Search* includes very different exercises, and the only one that is present more than one time is searching words from the text with clues. These words are to be filled into a crossword puzzle three times (McWhirr et al. 2008, 59, 84, 166) and

into lines provided either with the number of letters (McWhirr et al. 2008, 68) or the first letter of the word (Mc Whirr et al. 2008, 168, 170). But *search* also includes for example searching which character in the story did what (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17) and searching for certain expressions from a text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 67) or forms of spoken English from an email (McWhirr et al. 2008, 20). So even though students do rather a lot of searching when doing the exercises in this book, the exercises are very varied.

Text completion, on the other hand, is rather rigid in its form. Most text completion exercises in the book are from the same mould: they include a text that has vocabulary from the original chapter students have read and the clues of what is missing from the text are given in Finnish. Only 25 % of the exercises of this fourth most popular exercise type, which means three exercises, differ from this formula. In two of them students need to fill in the missing prepositions into the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 11, 60) and in one fill in the words from a previous exercise into the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 12). However, the statistics are a bit misleading in this case, since *text completion* is one of the exercises in chapter four, which is studied in groups of four, each student having their own section to read and own exercises to do. The exercises are all similar: each part includes comprehension questions, a matching exercise and a text completion. This means there are four of these text completions but actually only one of them is done by an individual student. However, if the chapter is studied with time, the groups may have enough time to study all these parts together with the help of the student who has read it first and do all the exercises. This naturally depends on the teacher and the time

allotted for this chapter.

Expressing opinion is mostly carried out in *Open Road Course 1* with the help of straightforward questions (McWhirr et al. 2008, 41, 68, 69, 73), but some other compelling solutions could also be found. In one occasion *expressing opinion* is combined with *re-presentation of the content* and after telling the main points of the story, which is about three young adults with disabilities having life-changing school exchange experiences, students tell each other their own opinions about the issue and discuss whether they would like to go on an exchange and why (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17). Somewhat similar are the exercises in which students need to express their opinion on the actions of the characters in the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 59) and in another chapter tell their group whether they agree or disagree with some of the statements related to the issue of the chapter, computer games (McWhirr et al. 2008, 77). In addition to these, there are also exercises in which students do a short survey in the classroom about sleeping habits (McWhirr et al. 2008, 80), they discuss how housework should be divided among family members (McWhirr et al. 2008, 63) and match pictures of faces with pictures of feet and explain their choices to their partner and compare answers (McWhirr et al. 2008, 30). Since the exercises are different each time even if they were in the form of straightforward questions, this type seems to be well varied. In addition, the other possible ways of expressing opinion seem refreshingly different.

Multiple choice forms 6 % of all the literacy exercises in the book. Most of these exercises are comprised of sentences that have gaps in them and students are given three choices with what to fill in the gaps. They might have to choose the word or

phrase that makes most sense (McWhirr et al. 2008, 27) or the words that complete the idiom (McWhirr et al. 2008, 44). They might also have to choose a synonym for some word (McWhirr et al. 2008, 83) or choose a word that does not belong in the same group with the other words (McWhirr et al. 2008, 168). However, there are some quite different multiple choice exercises as well. After a chapter that deals with food, students' knowledge on different food related issues is tested in a quiz (McWhirr et al. 2008, 71) and alongside a text about computer games is a multiple choice for the students to guess what the new and complex words mean (McWhirr et al. 2008, 75-76). In the latter case they only have two different options to choose from. This exercise puts their inference skills to the test and by teaching students ways to tackle unfamiliar words it also prepares them to better face the texts they encounter in the future.

Imagine somehow expands the theme further, and this type covers 6 % of all the exercises in the book. Students might have to improvise a family counselling meeting (McWhirr et al. 2008, 67), design a computer game of their own (McWhirr et al. 2008, 79), write 100 words about a related topic (McWhirr et al. 2008, 13), write a dialogue that ends in a certain way (McWhirr et al. 2008, 62) or study different occurrences of significant dreams in the Bible and retell the stories in their own words (McWhirr et al. 2008, 87). One interesting exercise combines *imagine* and *respond* by giving students three choices to choose from, two of which are *respond* and one *imagine*. Students are supposed to write a personal email, like the letters or the email they have seen on previous pages, and it is either to be a letter to an imaginary girlfriend or a boyfriend to break up with them or an email between

some of the characters in the text to meet or to get back together (McWhirr et al. 2008, 29). The latter options fall into the category of *respond*, while the first one is *imagine*. Surprisingly, this is the only time *respond* occurs in this book.

Re-presentation of the content can be realized in many ways even though the basic idea of all the exercises is the same: to tell the story again in one's own words. The basic exercise in this type in *Open Road* seems to be expressed well after chapter six: "[e]xplain how these words are related to the story" (McWhirr et al. 2008, 59), and the same idea is present in chapter one (McWhirr et al. 2008, 9) and in chapter two to some extent as well (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17). In chapter two, students are presented with the stories of three different people and with the help of four verbs per person they are supposed to retell what the people in the chapter said. There is also an exercise in which students tell about the story with the help of diagrams with words in Finnish (McWhirr et al. 2008, 40) and continue sentences so that they are in keeping with the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 25). Even the exercises that were similar in structure were made to look very different with colourful bubbles and different ways of presenting the clues, so the type does not seem that unvaried, but nevertheless there could be more variation. Pictures are not used at all and diagrams only once, and even that time it was more like Finnish clues on different coloured circles than a real diagram.

Comprehension questions form 4.2 % of the literacy exercises in the book, the same percentage as *explain*. Again the numbers are a bit misleading since chapter four, the chapter that is divided into four different parts to be studied by the different members of the group, includes four sets of comprehension questions as

well. However, as mentioned above, it might be that all the exercises are done by the members of the group, if enough time is given. There is only one occurrence of *open questions* that test whether the reader has actually understood the text and what it says (McWhirr et al. 2008, 83). *Explain*, on the other hand, is the only other exercise type along *translation* in the section *Service Station From A to B*, and is thus more popular. There are in total three crossword puzzles (McWhirr et al. 2008, 154, 156, 158) that are labelled as *explain*. The idea is that A's crossword puzzle has half of the words ready and B's puzzle has the other half and they fill in their puzzles by explaining the words to each other without saying them directly. The two other exercises in this type are explaining in Finnish or in English what either the idioms or idiomatic expressions mean (McWhirr 2008, 45, 78).

Rest of the exercises have two or less occurrences in the book. *Making diagrams* is present twice. Students have to to fill in the missing words to a table that contains verbs and nouns from the same roots as well as their translations (McWhirr 2008, 11). The missing words can be found from the text. The second exercise of this type is similar: students need to put the given words into the three categories, verbs, nouns and adjectives. These exercises train their morphological awareness and make it easier for them to recognize the different characteristics of different parts of speech. However, this type could be used in different ways as well and could be useful for example when combined with *re-presentation of the content*.

Mistakes in the text, gapped text, segmenting and *prediction* are not used at all, and the rest of the types once. Interesting exercises are for example *provide a title* and *summarise*. *Provide a title* presents an email from an American student on an

exchange in Europe and asks students to consider the following (example 5):

(5) Which of the following do you think would be the best "subject" header for this email? (All of the answers are possible, but you need to be able to explain why you chose your answer.)
a. Too busy!!
b. Light at the end of the tunnel!
c. Vive le public transport!!
d. Into the unknown… (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19).

The exercise makes students think harder by explicitly saying that all the answers are possible and they just need to justify their choice well. This could provide material for interesting classroom discussion as well.

Summarise is made equally interesting: after reading the chapter titled "Playing with Fire" (which is based on "Learning to love mass murder", an article by Peter Olafson), students need to choose from four rather good choices the main message of the writer (McWhirr et al. 2008, 77). These exercises prove that traditional exercise types such as *provide a title* and *summarise* can be developed further and adapted. In addition, *do-it-yourself questions* have been developed into a game in example 6:

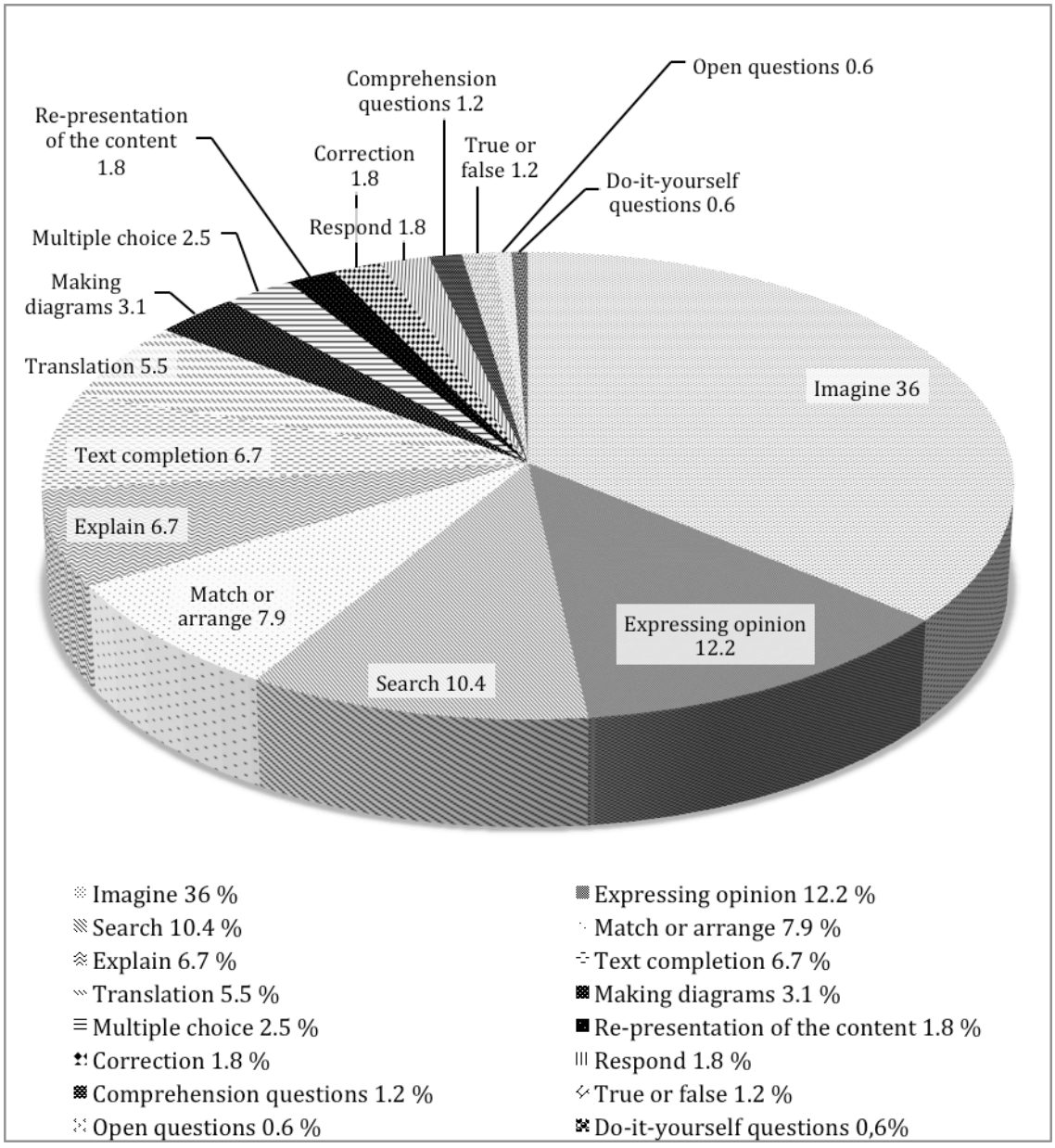
(6) Now have a look at all the texts and come up with at least one question from each text. Write each question on a separate piece of paper with the correct answer at the bottom. Then form groups. Place all the questions in one pile upside down. One of you starts by reading aloud the question on the top. The first to answer correctly gets the piece of paper. … The one who collects the most pieces of paper is the winner. (McWhirr et al. 2008, 40)

4.3.6 Log In!

The total amount of exercises from *Log In!* to be included in this study is 164 and they are very unevenly divided among the exercise types. *Imagine* has the highest percentage of 36, while the next popular one, *expressing opinion*, has only modest

12.2 %. *Search* is not far behind with 10.4 %. The next ones are *match or arrange*, *explain* and *text completion*. Only 16 types were used and of these 16, seven had percentages less than two, so they were used only once or twice in the entire book. The percentages of the exercise types can be found in the following figure.

Figure 3. Exercise types in *Log In!*



The amount of *imagine* exercises is staggering and the exercises include a lot of

application exercises that bring the issues of the text close to the students' experience. Good examples are an exercise in which students follow their surroundings for a certain amount of time and make a list of English words, concepts and names they encounter and translate them (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 9), an exercise in which students write about their weekend (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 104) or about the safety equipment they need in their work and why it is important to wear it (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 76). However, the numbers are again highly unreliable because the book includes a lot of extra exercises, which can be done but can just as easily be left out by the teacher. Out of all the *imagine* exercises 74 % are extra exercises, and that is a remarkable number. Most of them are most likely not done, but they are nevertheless an interesting group of exercises, ranging from longer ones to very short ones. The short exercises of this type are exemplified by an example 7:

(7) Check the current exchange rate of the currency of your planned destination. How much would you get from EUR 100? (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 27).

Example 8 is one of the longer *imagine* exercises:

(8) Work in groups of three. Choose a job advertisement. Two of you act as employers. Make a list of questions you would like to ask the prospective employee. One of you is applying for the job and he/she should plan how to answer the questions that will supposedly be asked. Play the roles. (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 63).

The exercises very often expand the ideas of the texts, and make students talk or write about the themes and somehow use the words they have learned. According to Dennis et al. (2009, 502), it is important to engage students in "meaningful conversations about text" if teachers want to create a thoughtfully literate

classroom. With these exercises students become involved and use their English skills to discuss or write about the things they have read. Moreover, when students use the words they have encountered, they are more likely to remember them. Parris and Block (2008, 261) point out that "the more concrete and personal connections that students can make to a specific word, the better it seems to be learned" and that "making connections with other reading material or oral language in other contexts has a significant effect in the development of a rich reading vocabulary."

Expressing opinion is the second most popular exercise in the book, and very often *expressing opinion* and *imagine* are together after the initial vocabulary exercises of the text. As is the case with *imagine*, also *expressing opinion* is a popular extra exercise, but not at all as popular as *imagine*: only 40 % of the expressing opinion exercises are extra exercises compared to the 74 of the *imagine* exercises. A popular pattern seems to be to put one expressing opinion exercise after the initial vocabulary exercises and then optional, extra *imagine* exercises after that. Expressing opinion exercises are very practical and relate to the world the students live it, and this is how the exercises deliver the promise the book writers make in the introduction. The exercises for example ask students to talk about their motivations for studying and learning styles (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 12-13), their favourite holiday locations (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 21), their work experience (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 49) and what to wear to a job interview (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 63). These exercises bring the issue of the text and the vocabulary close to the lives of the students and in order to express their opinions they need to use the words

they have learned doing the previous vocabulary exercises. They also get to use the language they very well might need in the future, since the themes of the book are very close to the real life situations students might find themselves in. So it is not surprising that *expressing opinion* is the second most popular exercise type in the book. It also helps students make the kind of personal connections with words and phrases Parris and Block (2008, 261) call for to ensure vocabulary retention.

Some exercises do not mention whether they are meant to be done orally or by writing and some actually demand both writing and speaking, but of those that clearly require either writing or speaking, speaking exercises are a lot more common. 40 % of all the *expressing opinion* exercises are explicitly speaking exercises while only 10 % are concerned with writing. However, 25 % most likely require both while other 25 % is unclear and could be either one, depending on the instructions the teacher gives the students. Of the exercises that require both writing and speaking the three surveys the book includes are particularly interesting. The idea is that students first write into a table their own opinions and then interview at least two of their classmates about the same issues. The surveys are about reasons for studying English (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 12), summer jobs (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 49) and favourite music (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 94), so the themes most likely interest most of the students. In other interesting exercises students choose whether they think some statements are true or false and later discuss their choices (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 13), rank the qualities of good friends and later compare and re-rank the qualities in groups (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 92) and prepare arguments either for or against controlling the Internet (Frisk and

Tulkki 2007, 143). It would be easy to make this type of exercises just by writing down questions students need to answer, but the writers of *Log In!* have clearly given the exercises another thought and even though there are many expressing opinion exercises, they are very different in nature. Some of them are very short questions to be answered orally with a partner while some demand writing a story and some might even take one whole lesson if done thoroughly. The variation inside this type is exceptionally good.

Search represents one tenth of all the exercises in the book. In most cases searching means looking for synonyms or opposites from the text, but also certain words whose explanations have been given in the exercise. In one such exercise students are given definitions of words that appear in the text and they are supposed to fill in the words in a crossword puzzle (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 36). The definitions for words that are down in the puzzle are (example 9)

(9) 1. A small room going up and down
3. A place where you can eat
6. An object to remember a place by
7. To close your door firmly for example with a key
9. For two people you need a … room (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 36)

However, there are some exercises that break the pattern: searching words from a maze (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 96), English-speaking countries from a map (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 10) and all the household appliances from the text (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 107). There are also exercises that do not occur in any other books in this survey. These are for example letter maze (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 96), naming pictures (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 18, 27, 39) and putting letters into the right order with the help of explanations (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 31, 128).

Match or arrange is the next most popular with 7.9 %. In most cases students are supposed to match words with pictures (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 76, 100, 108, 117, 119, 124), but other elements are matched as well, such as synonyms (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 51, 123), translations (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 9, 25), words with definitions (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 89) and cities with things they are famous for (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 125). The only arranging exercise asks students to arrange times of day into the right order (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 82). Since 46 % of all the match and arrange exercises are similar, there could be more internal variation inside this type. However, this is usually a quick exercise to revise the most important vocabulary right after the text, so it is most likely sufficient that there is at least some variation inside this type, and that has been accomplished in *Log In!* well enough.

Explain and *text completion* come next with the percentage of 6,7 each. They are fairly common. As a type, *explain* is a bit repetitive, even thought there is some variation. Of all the explain exercises 36 % ask students to write a story or a piece of news in which they use certain words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 112, 119, 129, 133). Another 36 % consist of exercises in which students form sentences around given words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 19, 31, 82, 96), but the sentences do not need to be connected in any way. At the beginning of the book students write separate sentences and only later start writing stories, when their skills have developed. Students also need to describe given words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 102), explain what they mean in Finnish (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 143) and explain what they think the author of given sentences has meant by them (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 93).

Text completion is a bit more varied than *explain*, but even in this type 36 % of the exercises are similar: texts to be completed with the help of Finnish clues about the missing words or phrases (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 88, 112, 118, 129). Another popular exercise is to give the words to be added into the text separately and tell students to put them into suitable places (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 61, 114). This type represents 18 % of all the text completion exercises.

Translation forms 5.5 % of all the literacy exercises in the book. Most translation exercises, 55 % of them, are crossword puzzles with clues in Finnish (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 17, 65, 85, 118, 132). Each time the words can be found from the texts. In one exercise students need to translate sentences from English into Finnish (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 114) and once they need to translate computer parts into English (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 137), but the catch is that this time there are no Finnish translations but students need to know the names of the parts beforehand. Luckily the previous chapter helps. Very interesting translation exercises are simulated discussions between a receptionist and a customer (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 35), and between a waiter and a customer (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 45). In these exercises students are told what they are supposed to say, but they are not told the exact lines, so they can improvise if they wish to. They can also choose how to answer in some cases. These situations involve a lot of phrases that are repeated each time so making students act out these discussions is a good idea.

All in all *translation* is not at all as common as in the upper secondary school books and it includes mostly translating individual words, not whole sentences. This difference can most likely be explained with the different targets of instruction. In

upper secondary school students should attain the level B2.1 while the target level in vocational school is A2.1 and in some skills A2.2. Kozue (1997, 494) points out that especially intermediate and advanced students benefit from translation exercises, and thus *translation* has its place in upper secondary school books, but since students in vocational schools are not intermediate students or at least they do not need to be to reach the targets of the instruction, *translation* can be scarce and focus more on items of vocabulary and service situations than on structures and register.

Making diagrams means in *Log In!* only filling in tables. There is no mention of other kind of diagrams or even mind maps in the book. Two of the exercises, which mean 40 % of making diagram exercises, are connected with *expressing opinion*, and surveys to be exact (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 12, 49). The three others are filling in individual words to tables: making given adjectives into nouns (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 19), filling in the names of countries, capitals, languages and citizens (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 10) and verbs and nouns from the same root and their translations (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 61). Exercises like the last one develop students' ability to recognize what kind of suffixes verbs and nouns take and perhaps develop their morphological awareness.

Surprisingly, *multiple choice* is more concerned with vocabulary than text comprehension in *Log In!.* As much as 75 % of these exercises deal with either Finnish translations of words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 74, 141) or their synonyms in English (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 101). Only one occurrence of text comprehension is in the form of *multiple choice* questions (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 137).

Re-presentation of the content, *respond* and *correction* each form 1.8 % of the exercises. The amount of the re-presentation of the content exercises is surprisingly low: they are used only three times and in two different chapters. The most traditional one is in the chapter that deals with travelling by plane. The exercise asks students to put certain words in logical order, and since the words appear in the text in the right order, students must try to remember what the text told them about travelling by plane and the procedures it involves.

Even though as a type *respond* is very useful, it is not used that much in *Log In!.* It is possible that since there are so many *imagine* exercises, there is not enough space and time for *respond*. *Correction* could also be used more; it is used only three times. Students for example change expression of time in sentences in two exercises (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 113) and later change direct demands into polite requests (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 120).

Traditional exercise types to test reading comprehension are among the least used exercises in the book. *Comprehension questions* get only 1.2 %, as do *true or false*. *Open questions* and *do-it-yourself questions* get 0.6 % each which means they are used only once in the entire book. *Pre-questions, provide a title, summarise, continue or preface, gapped text, mistakes in the text, segmenting* and *prediction* are not used at all. This means that *Log In!* employs the least amount of different exercise types, even though it clearly has the largest amount of literacy exercises of the books in this study. *Log In!* differs from the upper secondary books in many ways. It has a different aim and it is also structured differently and the literacy exercises differ in relative percentages as well as in total amount.

The book really delivers what it promises: it has a lot of vocabulary exercises accompanied with some writing exercises and a lot of oral exercises that are related to work and everyday life. However, the book contains a lot of reading passages and most of them are quite extensive. Still only few chapters have any kind of exercise to test if it has been understood. The book could be complemented with exercises that motivate students to read and exercises that test comprehension. As it is, the book leaves all the motivating and the testing to the teacher, and if the teacher does not realize to complement the exercises, the reading abilities of the students might not improve as much as they could. For example the total lack of any kind of summarising exercises is disconcerting, as is the absence of *pre-questions*. Students' previous knowledge is never activated fully before reading. In addition, this kind of exercises are easy to come up with, and for example *mistakes in the text* could be very useful for testing students' understanding when reading about safety procedures, cooking, travelling or computers.

4.4 Discussion

In the previous chapter I discussed my findings in detail in relation to each individual book and considered the types of exercises each book contains. In the following chapters I will first compare the books and point out the biggest differences between them, and then discuss the exercises in the books and how they relate to the different literacy skills, discussed in detail in chapter 2.3.4. I will begin by comparing the book, then move on to discussing flexible reading techniques, namely skimming, scanning and detailed reading. Then I will examine clues outside

the texts, tackling unfamiliar words and the structure of texts. Because these are present in the material with varying degrees, there will be more to say about some literacy skills than others.

4.4.1 Comparison

Not surprisingly, the two upper secondary school books, *English Update* and *Open Road*, are the two that resemble each other the most, while *Log In!* is the odd one out. This can be expected since *Log In!* is meant for a different audience. However, there are differences between *English Update* and *Open Road* as well. The most common exercises in both books are similar, but the amount of respond exercises is striking: this is where *Open Road* differs from *English Update* in a significant way. In *English Update* students are rather frequently asked to respond to the text, to be involved in the story in one way or another, but in *Open Road* this is quite rare.

The biggest difference between the upper secondary school books and the vocational school book *Log In!* can be seen in the most common order of exercises after the text, which is clearly reflected in the percentages different exercise types get. While both upper secondary school books employ some kind of exercises to test comprehension after the text – be it *translation*, *re-presentation of the content* or *comprehension questions* – before going to vocabulary revision, *Log In!* goes straight to vocabulary practice and after that to *imagine* and *expressing opinion*. This is not the case in all chapters, but the pattern is clearly discernible. After all, *Log In!* explicitly promises in its introduction to widen the students' vocabularies and provide practice in using English in everyday situations as well as in work-related

situations.

Multiple choice is also very little used in *Log In!*. This is another clear difference especially to *English Update*. In addition, it is also possible to see that the two upper secondary school books employ a considerable amount of matching or arranging exercises while *Log In!* does not. In the former books more than one exercise in six is a matching exercise, while in *Log In!* less than one exercise in twelve is a matching exercise. Even though *Log In!* includes a large amount of vocabulary exercises, the relative amount of this type of exercises is nevertheless small. The exercises in the upper secondary school books are also more varied than in *Log In!.*

On the other hand, the searching exercises in *Log In!* also include searching information from other sources such as dictionaries while in *English Update Course 1* and *Open Road Course 1* students search for things from the text or from the vocabulary list of the text. This widens the scope of the book since the exercises make students use resources they might use in real life for example when they encounter words they do not know.

4.4.2 Flexible Reading Techniques in the Material

The books train students to use flexible reading techniques in very different ways and provide a different amount of practice for each skill. Only *English Update* explicitly mentions scanning and skimming in the exercises, the other two books do not. Whether the books mention the styles or not, at least some if not all flexible reading techniques are present in each book.

4.4.2.1 Scanning

In *English Update* scanning is mentioned explicitly, and is related to comprehension questions for example after texts seven and eight (Kallela et al 1998, 42, 47) and also to searching (Kallela et al. 1998, 42). Scanning is present in *Open Road* as well. For example exercise A in chapter two trains students to scan the text for details (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17): three young disabled people write in the text about their exchange experiences abroad and in the exercise students are asked to decide which one of the three young people fits into the sentence so that it is in keeping with the text. There are sentences like (example 10)

(10) 1. _____ is unable to hear.
2. _____ finds it hard to concentrate.
3. _____ has difficulties in seeing.
4. _____ went to Germany (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17).

But there are also sentences in which all of the three names can be added, such as "12. _____ learned to be more independent" (McWhirr et al. 2008, 17).

In example 11 there is scanning in the form of *comprehension questions*:

(11) 1. Why did Nadia almost drop the phone?
2. Why doesn't Natalie believe in the psychic potential of dreams?
3. What, for example, can make people have nightmares? (McWhirr et al. 2008, 83)

These questions demand scanning just like the searching exercise described above. In *Log In!* there are rather few scanning exercises, but there is one clear example: the *comprehension questions* after a brief text about one young man's work practice period, since students are for example asked to explain how the first day of the work practice went, what kind of tasks he had during the week and what was his opinion

of the work period (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 68-69). To answer these questions students need to scan the text. To sum up, in Log In! scanning gets the least attention and the teacher might want to complement the book with some scanning exercises to help students develop their scanning skills. They are, after all, useful skills for later life.

4.4.2.2 Skimming

Skimming is explicitly mentioned in *English Update* only once, in an exercise in which students are first asked to skim the text to get a good understanding of the text and then to underline phrases that describe a child's personality from it (Kallela et al. 1998, 86). *Open Road* does not mention skimming and the exercises mostly require detailed reading and a good knowledge of the content of the text. *Log In!* does not employ any skimming exercises either. These two books could be complemented for example with some *pre-questions* to get an overall picture of one of the reading passages beforehand and develop this important skill as well.

4.4.2.3 Detailed Reading

Detailed reading is needed in many cases, and students are expected to use this skill often to find answers to different exercises related to the texts. The most basic type to develop study skills is *comprehension questions*. Other exercises that test whether the text has indeed been understood or not and demand detailed reading are for example *re-presentation of the content, true or false*, *multiple choice*, *match, expressing opinion* and *continue and preface.*

Comprehension questions are not very prominent in *Open Road* and constitute

only 4.2 % of all the literacy exercises in the book. These questions can be in Finnish as in the exercise in which students need to find answers to questions for example about the introduction of shoes that support the foot (McWhirr et al. 2008, 33), but the questions can also be in English as in the example in which students need to answer for example the question "Why did Nadia almost drop the phone?" (McWhirr et al. 2008, 83). As said before, this could be an exercise to develop students' scanning skills as well. This applies to the comprehension questions in *Log In!* as well, since answering the questions about the young man's work practice period can also demand detailed reading and not only scanning if the student has not read the text carefully beforehand. Indeed, in *Log In! comprehension questions* are very rare and there are only two instances of this exercise type in the book.

There are more comprehension questions in *English Update* than in *Open Road*. The percentage of comprehension questions in *English Update* is 5 %. There are quite a few sets of questions in *English Update* and some of them are particularly noteworthy, for example an exercise in which students answer comprehension questions from each paragraph and at the same time draw a diagram, a mind map, in their notebooks about the subject of the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 106-107). Later on, they use the diagram to retell the story. The completion of this exercise demands time but also studying the text and reading it closely, because the text is only six paragraphs long but there are 27 questions about it.

However, *comprehension questions* are not the only exercises to nurture the skill of detailed reading. In *Open Road* also matching pictures and texts functions as an encouragement for detailed reading (McWhirr et al. 2008, 86), as well as *re-*

*presentation of the content (*McWhirr et al. 2008, 9, 17, 25, 40, 59), *provide a title* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19), *do-it-yourself questions* and do-it-yourself *true or false* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 40, 77), *search* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 68) and, oddly enough, *expressing opinion* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 59, 77). In the first expressing opinion exercise students are asked to express their opinion on the actions of the characters in the text and explain how rightly or wrongly they think the characters acted and why (McWhirr et al. 2008, 59) and in the second one rate statements related to the topic of the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 77). These are rather subtle ways to make students read the text, but they do encourage detailed reading to get the background information to complete the exercises.

English Update on the other hand uses *open questions* (Kallela et al. 1998, 12, 21, 62), *multiple choice* (Kallela et al. 1998, 15, 26, 35, 70, 76, 86, 94), *continue* (Kallela et al. 1998, 21, 35, 102), *respond* (Kallela et al. 1998, 32, 124), *imagine* (Kallela et al. 1998, 66, 116), *match* (Kallela et al. 1998, 94, 116), *expressing opinion* (Kallela et al. 1998, 116) and *search* (Kallela et al. 1998, 124). An interesting example is again *expressing opinion.* In this exercise students need to compare the new version of Little Red Riding Hood in the book with the traditional story, and they need to read the text very carefully, that is to use their detailed reading skills, to describe the differences (Kallela et al. 1998, 116). *Respond* and *imagine* also demand detailed reading, as well as *continue*, because without knowing the original text well, it is rather hard to respond to it or continue it, but the exercises also demand imagination from the student. Another good example of an exercise that demands close reading is a continue exercise in which students have read four short news

stories and are asked to continue each story with “a few lines” in their notebooks (Kallela et al. 1998, 35). They are given a question to help them continue each story.

The only exercise that demands close reading in *Log In!* is a true or false exercise in which students read a text about the way in which the English language conquered the world and then decide whether certain statements are true or false according to the text (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 111). If the students have read the text well before, they can only use their scanning skills, but if they are not familiar with the text and have not read it before, they need to read it closely before doing the exercise.

Both upper secondary school books use a myriad of exercise types to make sure students really have understood the texts and make them read the texts carefully with exercises that demand a good knowledge of the content. Scanning is present in both *Open Road* and *English Update,* but skimming only in the latter. *English Update* is also the only one to mention the skills by name. *Log In!* includes the least exercises to help skimming, scanning or detailed reading. However, it does say directly that it focuses on different skills. It could easily be complemented with extra exercises, just as *Open Road* could in relation to skimming, since all these skills are useful for readers because they provide flexibility.

4.4.3 Clues Outside the Text in the Material

Clues outside the text include a variety of factors. Students should learn to evaluate the usefulness of a text on the basis of the clues the text provides such as the table of contents, titles and possible pictures without having to read the entire text.

Unfortunately, the form of the texts is not focused on that much in any of the books. However, there can be said to be some exceptions and especially *Log In!* stands out in this respect. I will first discuss the use of clues outside the text in *English Update* and *Open Road* and then move on to *Log In!*. In the last chapter I will compare the books, discuss the similarities and differences and suggest improvements.

4.4.3.1 Use of Clues in the Upper Secondary School Books

In *English Update* there is only one example of using visual clues in the completion of the exercise and in that exercise students write a letter to their imaginary host family with whom they lived during their language course in Brighton (Kallela et al. 1998, 135). The phrases needed at the beginning of the letter are given after the exercise in a model letter that reads "Dear Mr Johns, Thank you for the great time I had with you and your family in Brighton in the summer. A friend of mine …" (Kallela et al. 1998, 135). The other option is to answer a classified ad with a letter and the beginning of the letter is given just like in the first exercise. The latter exercise is *respond* and the first one *imagine*. The idea in either case is that students copy the beginnings of the letters and in this way get familiar with the conventions of letter writing.

In *Open Road* there are three examples of exercises that use textual clues to help students learn the correct written forms. One of them is an email from a girl on exchange to her friends (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19). In the exercise students decide which of the four given subjects of the email is the best one. All the subjects could be used, so the main task is to be able to justify one's choice as well as possible. The

text has all the conventions of an email from a friend and even the layout looks real. In the next chapter students see the beginnings of four different letters (McWhirr et al. 2008, 23) and later on they are asked to write an email to a friend or imagine what the characters in the story would write to each other in different situations (McWhirr et al. 2008, 29). While doing this exercise, they can use the information they get from the text and the exercise with the email in the previous chapter. They are also given a set of phrases to start and end their emails correctly (McWhirr et al. 2008, 29). To sum up, in both *English Update* and *Open Road* students are given the model of letters and emails this way. They are presented with a letter and/or an email that incorporates conventions of this text type and the students are encouraged to imitate them.

4.4.3.2 Use of Clues in the Vocational School Book

In *Log In!* there are many exercises that employ clues outside the text but also texts that only look different. Chapter two is partly in the form of advertisements, and could be used as a model for travel advertisements, but there is no actual exercise in which the knowledge students could get from the text would be used (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 15). Later in the same chapter students are asked to fill in hotel reservation forms. This exercise, however, is not included in this study, because it is a listening exercise (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 34). Two responding exercises in chapter three are, however, relevant to this study. In these exercises students are asked to write their own CV and an application letter to a job advertised in the book after reading about applying for a job in general and reading a model application

letter and a CV (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 54-57). The model application letter and CV are in the book in the form students are expected to write their own versions, so students need to look not only for textual clues but also for clues about how to design the layout of their documents. The same idea is used later in an imagining exercise in which students read a work practice report and write a similar one about their own work practice or summer job (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 68-69).

4.4.3.3 Differences, Similarities and Room for Development

In the upper secondary school books the exercises that use clues outside the text focus on the text types that might be encountered in matriculation exams and prepare the students to write similar texts themselves. The exercises make sure that the students know the conventions of letter writing and *Open Road* also makes sure they know how to communicate properly via email. This is a newer mode of communication and the students might need the skill in their everyday life, so it is very useful to practice it. In the future, there might even be a task like that in the matriculation exam. *Log In!* on the other hand does not prepare students for any particular exam but tries to teach the students skills they might need in their future career. This can be seen in the exercises that teach them to look at the form of the texts as well; the tasks focus on finding a job and writing about their work practice.

However, the books do not use the clues outside texts as much as they could. Students learn about conventions of certain genres of writing by looking at how these genres are represented in the book, and usually the exercise is to create a piece of writing in that genre. The focus, then, is on conventions and layout. There is

much more to clues outside the text than that. *Pre-questions* are not used at all in this purpose even though they might be very useful – students could look at the titles and headings, use of pictures and diagrams and so on. This kind of exercise could also be applied to texts outside the course book – they could for example practice finding information about a book from its table of contents and foreword.

4.4.4 Tackling Unfamiliar Words in the Material

All in all, there are plenty of exercises that broaden students' vocabularies in each of the books. Vocabulary is very important part of literacy in second language learning. Schmitt (2008) has overviewed current research on second language vocabulary learning and notes right in the beginning of his article that each student needs a substantial lexicon and some additional knowledge on the words as well to read and talk in English, and that this is a challenge "many/most learners fail to meet" (Schmitt 2008, 329). In his article, Schmitt summarizes the pedagogical suggestions that can be deduced from the research. Teachers should provide opportunities for incidental and intentional learning of words, diagnose which of the 3000 most common words students should know, provide chances to learn more about the words students already know and to practise fluency, encourage students to guess the meaning of words from context and teach students how to use different dictionaries. In addition to these, Schmitt adds that high vocabulary targets should be set and pursued, different approaches to learning new vocabulary should be used in different stages of the process and the meaning of the new words should be established quickly – this, he says, can easily be done with the first language of the

students. Later the words should be seen or heard repeatedly and extra knowledge could be gained by explicitly focusing on the form of the word but also by being exposed to the word in different contexts. (Schmitt 2008, 353.) Finally Schmitt points out that it is very important that students "maintain the maximum amount of engagement possible with lexical items" (Schmitt 2008, 353).

In this section I will discuss the total amount of literacy exercises in each book but also the amount of explicit vocabulary exercises. First, I will look at the most prominent exercise types that develop students' vocabularies and then look at the ways the books develop awareness of morphology and inference skills. Finally, I will look at the vocabulary exercises from Schmitt's point of view and compare my material to the views on vocabulary learning he presents.

4.4.4.1 The Most Prominent Vocabulary Exercise Types

To be able to discuss the different exercises that develop students' vocabularies explicitly, I have studied each book closely and counted the vocabulary exercises separately. These exercises either focus on vocabulary items or directly make students use vocabulary they have encountered while studying the texts. Problematic cases and bases for my choices are discussed in relation to each book in more detail. The amount of vocabulary exercises in relation to all the literacy exercises will reveal something about the focus of the books and the variety of these exercises how the team behind the book sees vocabulary learning in relation to other literacy exercises. If vocabulary is incorporated into several types of literacy exercises, learning of new words is seen to happen simultaneously with the

development of other literacy skills. However, if vocabulary exercises are mostly mechanical exercises in which students need to translate, match or search for certain items of vocabulary, learning new words seems somewhat detached from other areas of literacy. I will start by discussing the vocabulary exercises in *Log In!* and then move on to *Open Road* and *English Update*. Finally, I will make some comparisons between the books.

4.4.4.1.1 Log In!

Besides providing opportunities to practice oral communication, listening comprehension and writing, *Log In!* also promises to expand the students' vocabularies in its introduction. Indeed, the book does include a variety of exercises to do that and takes into account the need to use the words students have encountered. This can be seen for example from the large amount of *imagine* type of exercises, in which students use the vocabulary they already know and have recently encountered to do something concrete with the language. Of all the literacy exercises in *Log In!*, 58 % are vocabulary exercises. I have not included exercises that could be done with very little vocabulary if wanted, such as an exercise in which students are asked to list reasons why they would or would not want to travel to the United States of America (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 125). On the other hand exercises such as the optional exercise in which students are asked to match the US states and cities listed in the book with things they are famous for. These things are given in the exercise and include items such as Rocky Mountains, gambling, Miami Vice, earthquakes and beef (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 125). The exercise is included because

students work directly with items of vocabulary, even though the exercise tests cultural knowledge as well. This division is made because explicit vocabulary exercises in this study are the kind of exercises Schmitt (2008) calls exercises for intentional vocabulary learning, as opposed to incidental vocabulary learning, that can happen when doing any kind of exercises or reading any kind of texts.

Only eleven types of exercises out of the 24 types defined in this study are represented in this group, and the amounts vary substantially. *Imagine* is the largest type with 12 %. *Search*, *match or arrange*, *explain* and *text completion* follow with 10 %, 8 %, 7 % and 6 %, respectively. *Translation* and *expressing opinion* represent 5 % and 4 % of all the exercises and *multiple choice, making diagrams, correction* and *re-presentation of the content* are also present with some examples from each. The largest type, *imagine*, includes exercises such as designing a mobile phone with all the possible features it should in the student's opinion have after reading a text about telecommunications and encountering a lot of vocabulary related to smartphones (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 141) and describing what normally happens when people go to sauna in Finland (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 82). For the latter exercise, a special word box is given to make the exercise easier. *Search* includes naming pictures (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 18, 27, 39), finding certain things from the text such as the names of home appliances (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 107), opposites for certain words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 123) and the words for which explanations are given (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 128). *Match or arrange* includes only one arranging exercise and in the exercise students arrange the times of day into chronological order (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 82). Matching, on the other hand, is

more varied and encompasses for example matching translations (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 9, 24), synonyms (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 51, 123) and words to picture (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 76, 100, 108, 117, 119). Exercises labelled *explain* contain exercises in which students explain the meaning of given words (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 102, 143) but also making sentences (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 96, 119) and creating stories (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 112, 129). In *text completion* the words may be given in the right place in Finnish (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 88, 112, 118, 129) or they may be given in English but the right places need to be determined by students (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 114, 124). There is also one exercise that uses both of these, gives the words separately but also tells the translations in the right slots (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 61). The vocabulary in the exercise is related to work and many of the words are closely related, such as employ, employee, employer and employment, so the Finnish clues make the exercise somewhat easier. There is also one exercise in which students fill in colours into the text based on pictures next to the text (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 63) and one extra exercise in which students are supposed to use the vocabulary from the text they have just read, and the two or three fist letters of each missing word are given (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 99). All in all, *Log In!* delivers what is promises – it does give students plenty of opportunities to practice vocabulary.

4.4.4.1.2 English Update

Neither *English Update Course 1* nor *Open Road Course 1* make specific comments on the areas of language competence they focus on. The introduction of *Open Road*

Course 1 emphasizes the themes of the different chapters and only mentions that "the texts are accompanied by a variety of comprehension, vocabulary, translation, listening and speaking exercises" (McWhirr et al. 2008, 3). *English Update course 1* on the other hand mentions that all the texts are accompanied by functions that aid and promote the reading process and then introduces all the different sections of the book and explains what each section includes and how they contribute to the learning process (Kallela et al. 1998, 3).

With *English Update* it was sometimes much harder to decide whether an exercise should be labelled as a vocabulary exercise or not. For example the first exercise after text one, a multiple choice exercise, clearly tests students' comprehension of what they have just read, but employs much of the vocabulary used in the text and some other useful phrases as well. However, since the link with the vocabulary is not stated explicitly, I have decided to leave exercises like this out, since the purpose of this section is to focus explicitly on vocabulary. Again, I employ Shcmitt's (2008) division between incidental vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary learning and only include exercises that are meant for intentional vocabulary revision and learning. If the content of the text should for example be explained orally, students would necessarily need some of the words, and the exercise is intentional. In the multiple choice exercise they only need to tick the right answers, they don't need to use the words and phrases actively – but can indeed learn incidentally. Even though some of the exercises are left out in this section, it does not mean students could not learn new words from the exercises or remember the words better l after doing these exercises. This, however, is incidental vocabulary learning and not the main

focus of the exercises.

The results regarding the vocabulary exercises in *English Update* are not surprising: the most popular vocabulary exercises are matching exercises that comprise 14 % of all the literacy exercises in the book. The exercises labelled *search* constitute 10 % of all the literacy exercises and *translation* 9 %. The other types are clearly less prominent with *text completion*, *multiple choice* and *imagine* 4 % each and *making diagrams, expressing opinion* and *re-presentation of the content* some occurrences each. *Match or arrange, search* and *translate* clearly dominate the vocabulary exercises, and their presence is very clear in the *Build up* section, in which the idea is to revise and learn words, phrases and sentence structures and it has exercises for each text (Kallela et al. 1998, 5). The vocabulary exercises that are straight after a text or before it in the *Lead in* or *Follow up* sections vary more, for example 75 % of the *making diagrams* exercises are in these two sections just before or after a text.

4.4.4.1.3 Open Road

The vocabulary exercises in *Open Road* form 56 % of all the literacy exercises. There were similar difficulties in the definition of a vocabulary exercise as in the case of *English Update*, but having made the definition clear while working with the other books, the definition did not need refining. *Translation*, which was the third most common vocabulary exercise type in *English Update* and the sixth most common type in *Log In!*, is the most common type in *Open Road* with 13 %. The next most common is *match or arrange*, 10 %. *Text completion, search* and *re-presentation of*

the content follow with 7 %, 6 % and 5 %, respectively. However, it needs to be noted that both *match* and *text completion* include four exercises out of which only one is usually done by an individual student, because the text in question is divided into four parts which are then studied by different people in the group of students. The other vocabulary exercises in *Open Road* are *multiple choice* (4 %), *expressing opinion* (3 %), *making diagrams* (2 %), *explain* (2 %), *open questions* (less than one %) and *true or false* (less than one per cent).

4.4.4.1.4 Comparison and discussion

The results differ in each book and they paint a picture of the amount and variety of the exercises in each book.

Table 5. Vocabulary exercises in *Log In!*, *English Update* and *Open Road*

Book	*Log In!*	*English Update*	*Open Road*
vocabulary exercises out of literacy exercises	58 %	73 %	56 %
Exercise types in the order of frequency	• imagine 12 % • search 10 % • match and arrange 8 % • explain 7 % • text completion 6 % • translation 5 % • expressing opinion 4 % • multiple choice • making diagrams • correction • re-presentation of the content	• match and arrange 14 % • search 10 % • translation 9 % • text completion 4 % • multiple choice 4 % • imagine 4 % • making diagrams • expressing opinion • re-presentation of the content	• translation 13 % • match and arrange 10 % • text completion 7 % • search 6 % • re-presentation of the content 5 % • multiple choice 4 % • expressing opinion 3 % • making diagrams • explain • open questions • true or false

From the table we can see that some exercises are popular in each of the books

while others are represented in very different figures. If there is no percentage after the type, it is less than three per cent and has only few occurrences in the book. *English Update* includes the most vocabulary exercises in relation to all literacy exercises, while the other upper secondary school book contains the least amount of vocabulary exercises. However, the difference between *Log In!* and *Open Road* is not a big one. Although the top three vary, there are some clear tendencies to be seen as well. To begin with, *match and arrange* is quite high in all three lists, and even the most popular vocabulary exercise type in *English Update. Search* is the second most popular in both *Log In!* and in *English Update*, but only the fourth most popular in *Open Road. Translation* varies a lot: it is the most popular vocabulary exercise type in *Open Road*, the third most popular in *English Update* but only the sixth most popular in *Log In!. Log In!* trusts imagine exercises in vocabulary learning as well and it is the most common vocabulary exercise type in the book. The difference to bot *English Update* and *Open Road* is drastic: in the former *imagine* forms 4 % of the vocabulary exercises while there are no occurrences of it in the latter. In many ways, then, vocabulary exercises are very similar, but the one book that again differs from the others is *Log In!*. In the book the amount of translation exercises is significantly smaller than in the other two, and it employs a variety of imagine exercises as vocabulary exercises which are not present in the upper secondary school books. Again, the different aims of the books can partly explain this difference, but it is something teachers could also consider when teaching these books. Perhaps upper secondary school students could also benefit from bringing the vocabulary closer to their world and using the words they have learned in an imaginative way.

4.4.4.2 The Ways the Books Develop Morphological Awareness

The amount of exercises that teach morphological awareness is interesting since this kind of exercises can provide the learners means to widen their vocabularies beyond the book. In this chapter, I will first provide insights into research in the field of teaching morphological awareness and then move on to discuss this kind of exercises in the material of this study.

In her review, Joanne Carlisle (2010) integrated the findings of 16 different studies that dealt with morphological awareness in relation to literacy development. She observes that "the findings generally showed that morphological awareness instruction was associated with improvements in word reading or spelling and morphological analysis of unfamiliar words" (Carlisle 2010, 480). Carlisle (2010, 480) also points out that more research is needed on the issue so that informed instructional decisions can be made in the future.

Kirk and Gillon (2009) also show that improving morphological awareness with other types of linguistic awareness is a means to improve overall literacy skills. They proved in their study that "an integrated approach to literacy development facilitates reading and spelling" (Kirk and Gillon 2009, 348). The result also revealed that the pupils were able to generalize what they had learned (Kirk and Gillon 2009, 348). In their study, they used several different types of exercises to enhance the pupils' morphological awareness. All of them are not applicable to upper secondary school and vocational school books, but some of them could definitely be used. The pupils in their study were considerably younger than the target group of the books I examine, but as Carlisle (2010) points out, the effects of improving morphological

awareness can be seen in all age groups (at least from kindergarten to secondary school), although she also points out that in one study she examines "older students with reading disabilities … responded to morphological awareness and orthographic instruction more positively than the younger students" (Carlisle 2010, 476). Students in these studies are still younger than the target group of the books in this study, but we can nevertheless assume from this result that they could also benefit from learning morphological awareness.

Kirk and Gillon (2010, 345) use many different types of sorting activities in their test, for example pictures, which the pupils need to sort according to vowel length, and they also ask the pupils to find minimal pairs from a set of morphologically simple words, sort morphologically complex words to realize the differences between morphemes and sort base words according to parts of speech. They also used spelling. Spelling aloud is not used in the books but students do need to write a lot of words in the exercises of each book, so they practise spelling in writing that way. However, the different sorting tasks provide an interesting contrast, because exercises like these are not that common in any of the books. None of the books pay special attention to the vowel length in morphologically simple words and how the length affects the spelling of word-final phonemes, or that the suffix *–er* in *helper* means someone who helps but in *smaller* it means something else.

One of the issues that Kirk and Gillon raise is in fact dealt with in the grammar section of *English Update* and *Open Road*: the different phonemic realizations of the regular past tense morpheme *–ed*. However, since this is in the grammar section, these exercises are not included in the study and hence not discussed in more detail.

In addition, both books cover the issue only briefly, *English Update* states the rules (Kallela et al. 1998, 179) and then offers one pronunciation exercise (Kallela et al. 1998, 139) and *Open Road* includes one oral exercise without explicitly telling the rules (McWhirr et al. 2008, 123).

All in all, there is one exercise type that Kirk and Gillon use in their morphological awareness interventions that is clearly used in the books in this study as well and that is defining the part of speech of different words. The pupils in Kirk and Gillon's test were asked to define the part of speech of the base word so that they realize how different suffixes change the part of speech and how the different suffixes interact. But other types of exercises can also be used, and in the following chapter I discuss this in relation to the books.

4.4.4.2.1 English Update

The books take different approaches to teaching morphological awareness. *English Update* uses for example matching and searching exercises to raise students' awareness. Students are asked to match words to the right parts of speech and even though the exercise contains pairs such as *affect, effect* and *succeed, successful,* it also contains words like *lovable, adult* and *achieve* (Kallela et al. 1998, 153). When there are not that many words that can be confused with something similar, it makes the exercise to some extent easier. Students are also asked to search the text for verbs that can be changed into doers with the ending -er, for example *teacher* out of *teach* (Kallela et al. 1998, 153). Students are also asked to translate the words into Finnish and later to go through the text one more time to search for any other doers that

end in –er and translate them into Finnish as well. However, the other possible meaning, the comparative form of adjectives, of the suffix *–er* is not mentioned.

The use of diagrams is made good use of in teaching the difference between words such as *exciting* and *excited*. Students fill in a table that contains some of the words in English or their translations in Finnish. The first four words are all given, but then the table grows scarcer and students need to come up with more and more forms on their own and the last example they need to invent themselves (Kallela et al. 1998, 131). This exercise is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Exercise on ending –ing and –ed in *English Update*

amusing	***huvittava***	amused	***huvittunut***
exciting		excited	
	pelottava		***pelästynyt***
		interested	
tiring			***väsynyt***
			pitkästynyt
amazing			

Next students are asked to choose the right alternative from these two options for each sentence, such as the "special effects are amazing/amazed" (Kallela et al. 1998, 131).

4.4.4.2.2 Open Road

There are only two exercises of the type *making diagrams* in *Open Road* and they are both about parts of speech. In the first one there are three columns: noun, verb and translations. Just like in the exercise above, only some of the words are given in the exercise, and students need to find the missing words from the text. In some cases they have two words ready, but mostly they have to fill in two of the three categories. (McWhirr et al. 2008, 11.) The other exercise is a bit simpler: students need to arrange given words into boxes with the labels noun, verb and adjective (McWhirr et al. 2008, 60).

4.4.4.2.3 Log In!

Log In! teaches how to make adjectives into nouns with the help of a diagram (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 19) and to form sentences that include at least one word from given groups of nouns, adjectives and verbs (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 82). The most interesting exercises in *Log In!* are on page 61 and they are related to job vocabulary and different suffixes. In the first exercise students, again, fill in a table that has some missing words. It is very similar to the other exercise in *Open Road*, but this time there are four columns: verb, translation of the verb, noun and translation of the noun. Interestingly enough, the labels of the columns are not given in the exercise, but I guess they were considered unnecessary since all the translations have been filled in beforehand. (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 61.) The second exercise is surprisingly *text completion*, but the way the words to be filled in are given, makes it interesting (example 12):

(12)	employ	employee	employer	employment
		unemployed		unemployment
	interview	interviewee	interviewer	
	train	trainee	trainer	

(Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 61)

The arrangement of the words clearly guides students to take notice of the differences between the words with the same base word and since they need to fill in the words into sentences, they need to understand the differences as well.

The amount of exercises like this is not great and since the exercises are also very similar in nature, students do not get that much practice in morphological awareness.

4.4.4.3 Other Ways to Tackle Unfamiliar Words

Many things can help tackle unfamiliar words and knowing one's morphology might not always do the trick but one might need further help, say, from a dictionary. *English Update* does not encourage students to use a dictionary at any point, while *Log In!* explicitly states that the use of dictionary can help in some exercises. *Open Road* on the other hand advises students to use dictionary a couple of times but has its own section just for dictionaries and how to use them, which can be very helpful if there is time to go through it since students are only now starting their career in secondary school or vocational school and the effective use of dictionaries can be unfamiliar to them.

4.4.4.4 Comparison and Summary

All in all the students who study these books all get practice on their word-attack skills. There are clear differences between the books on how many exercises there are, how they are divided among different exercise types and how much intentional and incidental opportunities the books provide for vocabulary learning. *Log In!* includes a large amount of optional exercises that provide students chances to use the language creatively, especially in the form of imagine type of exercises, while *English Update* provides optional reading passages related to the theme of the unit at the end of each unit. *Open Road*, on the other hand, provides an array of *translate* and *explain* exercises in the section called *Service Station: from A to B*.

If we look back at what Schmitt (2008, 353) writes about teaching vocabulary, we can see that some of the aspects of good vocabulary teaching cannot be seen from the material of this study. We do not for example know whether the authors of the books have diagnosed the words students need most from the 3000 most common English words and included them in the books and whether they have a lot of practice in fluency. Fluency in writing is naturally addressed in several writing assignments in each book, but since fluency also includes spoken exercises as well as pronunciation practice, the amount of this kind of exercises is not known. Nevertheless, we have established that all books teach morphological awareness and include exercises that focus on the form of the words as well as on parts of speech.

The encouragement to use dictionaries varies, as well as the amount of instruction given to use them. *Open Road* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 96-97) dedicates

two pages for the use of dictionaries, while the teachers using *English Update* and *Log In!* need to find their teaching material elsewhere if they wish to focus on this aspect of vocabulary learning.

Guessing the meaning of the words is not encouraged much, but there is one exercise in *Open Road* in which this is done with the help of multiple choice, and the exercise is located right next to the text, from which the words can be found (McWhirr et al. 2008, 75-76). The other books do not try to teach guessing from context at all and again the teacher would need to complement the material if this kind of exercises were needed. As for the other things Schmitt mentions, we do not know about the targets the books set for vocabularies, but we can make some assumptions about the made meaning links between the English word and the Finnish one from the amount of translation exercises. The differences between these are rather remarkable: *Log In!* includes 5.5 % translation exercises out of all literacy exercises, *English Update* 10 % and *Open Road* 17.9 %. Many of the words in the texts are later practiced in different vocabulary exercises so there is definitely some exposure in different contexts. The maximum amount of engagement with lexical items is partly left for the teacher, who is the one to motivate students on a day-to-day basis.

4.4.5 Structure of texts in the books

In this chapter I will first discuss the amount of exercises that relate to cohesive devices, then the structure of different types of texts and interpreting the text as a whole, respectively.

4.4.5.1 Cohesion

As a whole, the structure of texts is not very much dealt with in any of the books. Some of the cohesive devices such as the pronouns and transitional words and phrases such as *yet, but* and *in addition* are mostly dealt with in the grammar sections of the books, but for example synonyms, which also create cohesion, are often taught with literacy exercises such as *match or arrange* or *search*. Indeed, these are the most common exercise types related to the use of synonyms, but *multiple choice* was used once in both *Log In!* and *Open Road*. *English Update*, however, includes most synonym exercises with 16 different exercises – most of them in the *Build Up* section, which is especially for practicing new words, phrases and sentence structures (Kallela et al. 1998, 5). *Open Road* is on the second place with eight synonym exercises and *Log In!* on the last place with only five exercises. Many of the crossword puzzles that in *Open Road* and in *English Update* included synonyms, were actually translation exercises in *Log In!* and that partly explains the difference.

It might be that the differences in the target level of the students' language competence between upper secondary school and vocational school can be seen in these exercises. In many cases the synonym can also be a definition of the word or the same thing said in different words, and I found it beneficial that the exercises at least sometimes pointed out that they are not exact synonyms but only words that "mean more or less the same" (Kallela et al. 1998, 138) or mean roughly the same (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 123).

4.4.5.2 The Structure of Different Types of Texts

The structure of different texts is not dealt with much, either. Because students in upper secondary school might need to write a letter in the matriculation exam, they need to know the form of the letter. They are taught this in *English Update* and *Open Road* with a model. In *Open Road* students first see four letters by the characters in the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 23) and then later write their own letter or email and they are even given a box of useful phrases (McWhirr et al. 2008, 29). They also see an email from an exchange student (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19). *English Update* uses the same idea but gives fewer examples (Kallela et al. 1998, 135). Neither of the books encourages students to study the form of the texts in any other way. Both of them include songs and *English Update* also poems, but the form of these is not studied at all. In *Open Road* most of the texts are stories of some kind, told from the point of view of one person. In addition, many of them are extracts from either books or short stories or based on articles, so the writers' personal style is still visible. This is not dealt with, either. The only time the style of the text is made visible to students is when they are asked to find exaggerations from the text that make the text more colourful and funny (McWhirr et al. 2008, 67). In *English Update* there are similar texts as well, but in addition to these *English Update* also employs interviews, magazine articles and informative texts about Britain, getting to know people and siblings, for example.

All these texts could and at least some of them should be examined from the point of view of the structure as well. Students could look at the structure of the text, the structure of an individual paragraph and for example the information structure of

the paragraph. In *English Update* many of the extra texts that are meant to be optional reading could provide good material to study rhetorical structure or underlying presuppositions. There is one example of this in *English Update*, and it is the type *arrange*: students arrange sentences in the same order as in the story they have read (Kallela et al. 1998, 102). The story is one of the optional texts and it is shortened into eleven sentences, which students then arrange into chronological order.

In *Log In!* there are texts that look different on the surface but the form of the texts is not focused on at all. Students are asked to make a similar text themselves, but they are not given any other guidance on what to look for in the texts. They are simply asked to write their own job application and CV based on the model (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 56) and a work practice period report in a similar fashion (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 69). These, as well as the restaurant menu (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 44), safety procedures list (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 77) and the different advertisements (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 15-16, 56-57) could be looked at in more detail from the point of view of the form as well. In addition, many of the informative texts in the book could also be studied: the structure of the paragraphs as well as the structure of the texts could provide students important knowledge on how texts are structured.

4.4.5.3 Interpreting the Text as a Whole

Interpreting the text as a whole is taken into account much more than the other text-attack skills. *English Update* uses *multiple choice* (Kallela et al. 1998, 15, 26, 86,

94), *respond* (Kallela et al. 1998, 21, 124), *comprehension questions* (Kallela et al. 1998, 32, 47, 56, 66, 106-107), *match or arrange* (Kallela et al. 1998, 34, 94, 102), *continue* (Kallela et al. 1998, 35, 102), *imagine* (Kallela et al. 1998, 21, 66, 102), *true or false* (Kallela et al. 1998, 98), *re-presentation of the content* (Kallela et al. 1998, 107) and *expressing opinion* (Kallela et al. 1998, 116). In some cases, however, there can be only one question that really takes into account the whole text and the others concentrate on general comprehension of certain things in the text. This is the case with for example the comprehension questions that deal with the text "Perfect Strangers." The first 15 questions ask for example about the looks of the characters and their actions, but the last one is about the two possible meanings of the title (Kallela et al. 1998, 32), and really is the only one about interpreting the text as a whole. The same thing applies to most sets of comprehension questions. Good examples of other interpreting tasks are matching titles to texts (Kallela et al. 1998, 34), writing a paragraph describing either the person telling the story about a football match or the crowd at the match (Kallela et al. 1998, 66) and arranging sentences in the right order according to the text (Kallela et al. 1998, 102).

In *Open Road*, *re-presentation of the content* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 9, 17, 25, 26, 40, 59) is used for this purpose, as well as *provide a title* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19), *imagine* and *respond* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 29), *comprehension questions* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 33, 35, 37, 39, 83), *open questions* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 67), *summarise* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 77), *true or false* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 77) and *match* (McWhirr et al. 2008, 86). Good examples of these are the matching exercise in which students match pictures with descriptions of sleeping positions (McWhirr et

al. 2008, 86), open questions which ask students to analyse what they have read from the point of view of the relationships in the text (McWhirr et al. 2008, 67), provide a title exercise in which students choose the best title for the text from options that are all possible (McWhirr et al. 2008, 19) and the various re-presentation of the content exercises. These include continuing sentences (McWhirr et al. 2008, 25), explaining the content with the help of Finnish clues given in a diagram (McWhirr et al. 2008, 40) or with the help of English clues (McWhirr et al. 2008, 9).

In *Log In!* there are significantly fewer exercises that focus on interpreting the text as a whole than in *English Update* and *Open Road*. The two re-presentation of the content exercises related to the text "Travelling by Plane" are the clearest examples of interpreting text as a whole (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 25). In these exercises students first arrange words related to travelling by plane into chronological order and then tell what happens at an airport with the help of these words. Other exercises include *do-it-yourself questions* related to the text (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 47), *comprehension questions* (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 69, 88), *true or false* (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 111), *re-presentation of the content* by continuing sentences (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 123) and *multiple choice* (Frisk and Tulkki 2007, 137-139).

However, all the exercises that I have described here in all three books are mainly concerned with the content of the text and not so much the structure or how the information is presented. The content comes first and even though it is naturally of the greatest importance, students would definitely benefit from looking at the

structure as well. All in all, this field of literacy is quite neglected and never addressed directly in any of the books. Synonyms are taught, but the exercises are all very similar in type and could include more variation and also references to the fact that synonyms can and need to be used if one wants to avoid unnecessary repetition. Structure of different text types is limited to letter and email writing and even then students are only shown a model, not explained it. This is left for the teacher. The books do include many different types of texts, and for example the argumentative structure of an article or a single paragraph could be very useful to learn. This is not taught in *English Update, Open Road* or *Log In!.* Individual words and word families are taught, but students are expected to know how to use the words in texts to create for example lexical cohesion inside the text. This may or may not be taught in their mother tongue in some other subjects and students might know how to construct a good text, but they might not be able to transfer their knowledge into English.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, the three books examined in this study, *English Update*, *Open Road Course 1* and *Log In!*, are very different from one another when it comes to the exercises that develop literacy skills, but they also exhibit some interesting similarities. The amount of literacy exercises as well as the amount of vocabulary exercises varies a lot. In many respects, *Log In!*, intended for vocational education, is different from *English Update* and *Open Road*, aimed at upper secondary school, which is expected, since the two latter are for the same target audience. To begin with, *Log In!* very often leaves out the exercise that tests text comprehension and that both *Open Road* and *English Update* have right after the text, and starts with vocabulary exercises. There are also very few detailed reading exercises in *Log In!* compared to the upper secondary school books, but this is related to the amount of exercises that test text comprehension. In vocabulary exercises *Log In!* surprisingly employs a great number of imagine exercises, while *English Update* and *Open Road* employ *match or arrange* or *translation*. *Open Road* and *English Update* also employ significantly more translation exercises than *Log In!*.

When we look at the different literacy skills, the books have similar shortcomings when it comes to teaching different literacy skills, but different strengths. *Log In!* includes several vocabulary exercises: more than half of all the literacy exercises are vocabulary exercises, and thus it provides ample opportunities to learn new words to use them so that they are remembered later as well. It also employs a lot of exercises that use clues outside the texts – clearly more than the other two books –

but then again it does not use the different types of texts it includes as well as it could. It is not enough that the students only imitate different text styles, such as letters or CVs, since the texts could also be studied from the point of view of the structure. This applies to all three books. Clues outside the text could then be used more in all the three books and teachers could complement their teaching with this kind of exercises, as well as exercises that promote awareness of text structures.

English Update focuses on vocabulary exercises but also explicitly teaches students different reading styles: skimming, scanning and detailed reading. *Open Road* does this as well, but only implicitly, leaving the explaining of these different styles to the teacher. *Log In!* does not mention any of these and includes the least amount of exercises: no skimming exercises, one scanning exercises and some detailed reading exercises. All these could be taught more. *Log In!,* then, employs the least exercises in which the students interpret texts.

There are several different literacy exercise types, as my analysis shows, but also several skills the exercises should teach if the students are to become fully literate in English. My study shows that it is possible to classify literacy exercises into types and this way gain knowledge about the ways the books teach literacy and the ways the books can and should be complemented in this area so that students can achieve good literacy skills. However, this study examined only three course books so other literacy types surely exist. In addition, the study did not take into account the way teachers and students feel about different exercise types and how effective the different types are. Further studies in to literacy teaching could reveal more about these factors. A study similar to this could reveal more about the validity of the

classification and provide more information about different course books. Also secondary school books could be studied.

This analysis of the literacy exercises in these three course books proves that if the teacher does not critically assess the book used in the classroom, some vital literacy skills may be neglected. Besides teachers who teach literacy skills in the classroom, this research can also help course book designers to pay more attention to literacy and to all the different types of literacy exercises, to the quality of the exercises as well as variation. It is important that course books offer a range of different literacy exercises so that students get various reading and writing experiences and as much insight into reading in English as possible. In addition, variation in exercises makes the book more interesting. Textbooks should also promote reading texts outside the book itself. Indeed, Nuttall (2005, 127) notes that it is most important to give the learners the opportunities and experiences they need to get out of the vicious circle of the weak reader – where the reader does not enjoy reading, does not read much, does not understand and reads slowly, and each of the factors produces the others – to the cycle of growth where the learner enjoys reading, reads faster, reads more and understands better. Nuttall (2005, 128) also points out that enjoyment and comprehension go hand in hand. In learning a new language, literacy is indeed paramount.

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